Volume 32, Number 3 Summer 2020

The Cut Flower QUARTERLY

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

for growers of field and greenhouse specialty cuts

Inside this Issue

3 From the President

6 The Farmer and the Florist

12 Grower Profile

14 The Seasonal Palette of Organic Cut Flower Production

18 Cut Flower Cooperatives

22 ASCFG Research Foundation Grant Report

26 Regional Reports

38 ASCFG News

46 From the Director

Cover photo courtesy of Ardelia Farm & Co.

The Cut Flower QUARTERLY

is published by
The Association of Specialty
Cut Flower Growers, Inc.
MPO Box 268, Oberlin, OH 44074

Judy Marriott Laushman, editor.
Linda Twining, layout.
2020 ASCFG
ISSN 1068-8013

PUBLISHING ISSUE	SCHEDULE DEADLINE
Spring	March1
Summer	June 1
Fall	September 1
Winter	December 1

All articles, features, and display advertising must be received by these deadlines for publication. *The Cut Flower Quarterly* welcomes advertising. Contact ASCFG for advertising insertion order form.

Contact Judy Laushman

(440) 774-2887 or mail@ascfg.org
www.ascfg.org

Subscription is included with ASCFG membership. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the ASCFG. No endorsement of named or illustrated products or companies is intended, nor is criticism implied of products or companies not included.

From the PRESIDENT

In Solidarity

Jennie Love

The Summer Solstice recently came and went. For me, both the Solstices each season are days for reflection while working quietly at the farm, contemplating the transition we, as stewards of the land, experience at the longest day and the shortest day each year. I'm grateful to feel so connected to the land and to the natural world as a whole. There are so many lessons to be learned there, and not everyone is fortunate to farm a piece of life-filled earth like I am. I fully acknowledge what a privilege it is.

One lesson from Nature came just a few days ago as I watched a young robin stand on the edge of the safe little nest it had called home since hatching. It barely had any feathers yet. The parents coaxed it to jump anyway. It was time. (Baby robins leave the nest at just two weeks old to live on the ground for another two weeks before they can fly.)

Of course, the poor little bird was clearly at odds with itself! The nest was so snug and comfortable. The ground so far down and rocky. It surely doubted its chances for survival. After all, it had never experienced anything like this before. I bet it felt impossible. But instinct told it that there was a good reason to take this terrifying leap of faith. The only way for it to learn to fly was to fall.

I have to confess I've been trying to write this letter to you all for over three weeks now. It's quite possibly one of the hardest things I've ever written in my life. I struggled with self-doubt and feeling incredibly inadequate to know what the "right" words were for this monumental moment in time.

Navigating Covid-19 was more than enough challenge for one lifetime. And then the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25th split wide open a festering wound long overdue for healing, shattering any smidgen of "normal" that remained. The first week of June, when the streets of Philadelphia, my city, filled with peaceful protestors and entirely too many additional examples of police using terrifying tactics, it felt like we were on the brink of falling into a deep chasm. My brain was already overwhelmed and my spirit limp from the exhausting journey this spring has been. Perhaps you felt the same? The constant and dizzying Covid pivots depleted every last resource I thought I had. I was (am) running on fumes. Still, I joined my voice with others to demand change, to value black lives, to reconsider our entire cultural framework, all the while feeling like I was falling.

That tailspin was at full throttle when it came to leading this vibrant and immensely valuable organization of flower farmers this spring. Rightly so, ASCFG members have strong and varied opinions on how we, as a professional organization representative of our niche industry, should approach this heavy chapter in history. My inbox was flooded by member messages. I did my best to listen to each of you and to respond. I hope that I did not make any major missteps along the way. I learned so much from each of your valuable perspectives.

When I took on the (volunteer) role of ASCFG President for a three-year term, I really only expected to lead the Board of Directors in a new initiative to develop a formal Strategic Plan and to help bolster the abundant existing educational resources for members pursuing professional flower growing. Oh, and to write a quarterly letter in this magazine that would hopefully contain a few valuable nuggets for floral entrepreneurs. I never would have thought the role would broaden so enormously to include navigating a worldwide pandemic and an intense narrative on anti-racism.

Myself and the rest of the all-volunteer ASCFG Board – to whom I am so very grateful for shouldering an immense leadership load to date in 2020 – have been propelled into collectively confronting the notable lack of diversity in our membership and the need to be much clearer on our stance about anti-racism. I can only speak for myself: I've had so much to learn along this path. And there is so much more to come.

I feel a strong kinship to that vulnerable robin fledgling, teetering and then falling to the ground, trusting that this scary fall will make really good sense in the long haul. Like the robin, I am figuring out how to navigate the world from a completely different perspective than I knew at the start of my life as a farm kid growing up in a tiny town in a remote valley at the foot of the Appalachian Mountains. I am committing much of my energy this summer (and beyond) to connecting with farming/gardening and food justice organizations in the Philadelphia region that are serving black and brown communities. I am eager to stand in solidarity with them, to enter new conversations, to do what I can to lift up farmers of color, to acknowledge conscious discrimination and unconscious bias, and to keep supporting change. I hope the ASCFG will do the same.

As we move forward, I wanted to leave you with a powerful thought; one that I read in the wonderful book, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Ms. Wall Kimmerer is an indigenous woman with a PhD in plant ecology. In the pages of her book, she weaves together wise and age-old observations of

the natural world with digestible lessons in academic science. In one chapter, entitled Allegiance to Gratitude, she tells about how the Onondaga people, a tribe original to the Iroquois nation that now calls central New York home, hold fast to a centuries-old "Thanksgiving Address". This Address is recited at the start of each day at Onondaga schools, the same way you might pledge allegiance to the flag.

The chapter is beautifully written and far too extensive for me to do it justice in this brief missive to you. But, in short summary, the words the Onondaga people say in unison each day bring their minds together to focus on all the natural gifts the earth has provided for them. They thank the sun, the rain, the wind, the small plants, the trees, the birds, the animals, and the land for unselfishly providing food, shelter, water, fire, and much more to us humans. Ms. Wall Kimmerer then makes an astute observation that has been sitting with me as the uncomfortable (and incredibly necessary) conversation about racism and oppression came to the forefront of so many of our minds this summer.

Ms. Wall Kimmerer observes that the Thanksgiving Address of the Onondaga people reaffirms on a daily basis that everything necessary to sustain our lives is already freely available. Voicing words of thanksgiving out loud each morning gives a sense of contentment and acknowledges respect for the gifts Nature provides.

"You can't listen to the Thanksgiving Address without feeling wealthy. And, while expressing gratitude seems innocent enough, it is a revolutionary idea. In a consumer society, contentment is a radical proposition. Recognizing abundance rather than scarcity undermines an economy that thrives on creating unmet desires. Gratitude cultivates an ethic of fullness, while economy needs emptiness. The Thanksgiving Address reminds you that you already have everything you need. Gratitude doesn't send you out shopping to find satisfaction; it comes as a gift rather than a commodity, subverting the foundation of the whole economy. That's good medicine for the land and the people alike."

Oppression is driven by one person wanting more than they have. And so, they take it from others. An economy driven by a sense of emptiness heightens our desire to own more and to have more, usually at the expense of many others. What if we all decided instead to sit with a heart full of gratitude for the beautiful flowers and the nourishing livelihood that Nature so graciously gives each of us in our fields? (I know we all work hard at our farms, but you can't deny that Nature is always in control and gives generously more often than not.) And with this deep-rooted sense of gratitude comes a greater desire to warmly welcome others rather than guard against them. There is plenty to share. After all, Nature brings new blooms and lessons to our fields every single morning.

I still do not feel I have the right words for this letter. I need to be at peace with that and hope that you will all graciously provide a cushioned landing whenever I might falter in my brief leadership of this incredible community of thoughtful and caring flower growers. I look forward to the day when our collective focus can once again be entirely on flowers. **But, for now, we've got other work to do, and I hope you will join me in seeking new connections with black, indigenous and other people of color, particularly those in the world of agriculture and floriculture, to stand in solidarity with them.**

In accordance with the Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers' Value Statement below, the ASCFG Board of Directors stands with our members of color and ALL people of color.

We value education.
We value community and collaboration.
We value environmental sustainability.
We value diversity and inclusion.
We value members at all growing scales and experience levels around the world.
We value science, particularly peer-reviewed research, and grower-led research.
We value each member's pursuit of financial success and sustainability.
We value the mental and physical well-being of farmers and farm workers in the cut flower industry.

Jennie Love is owner of Love 'n Fresh Flowers.
Contact her at info@lovenfreshflowers.com

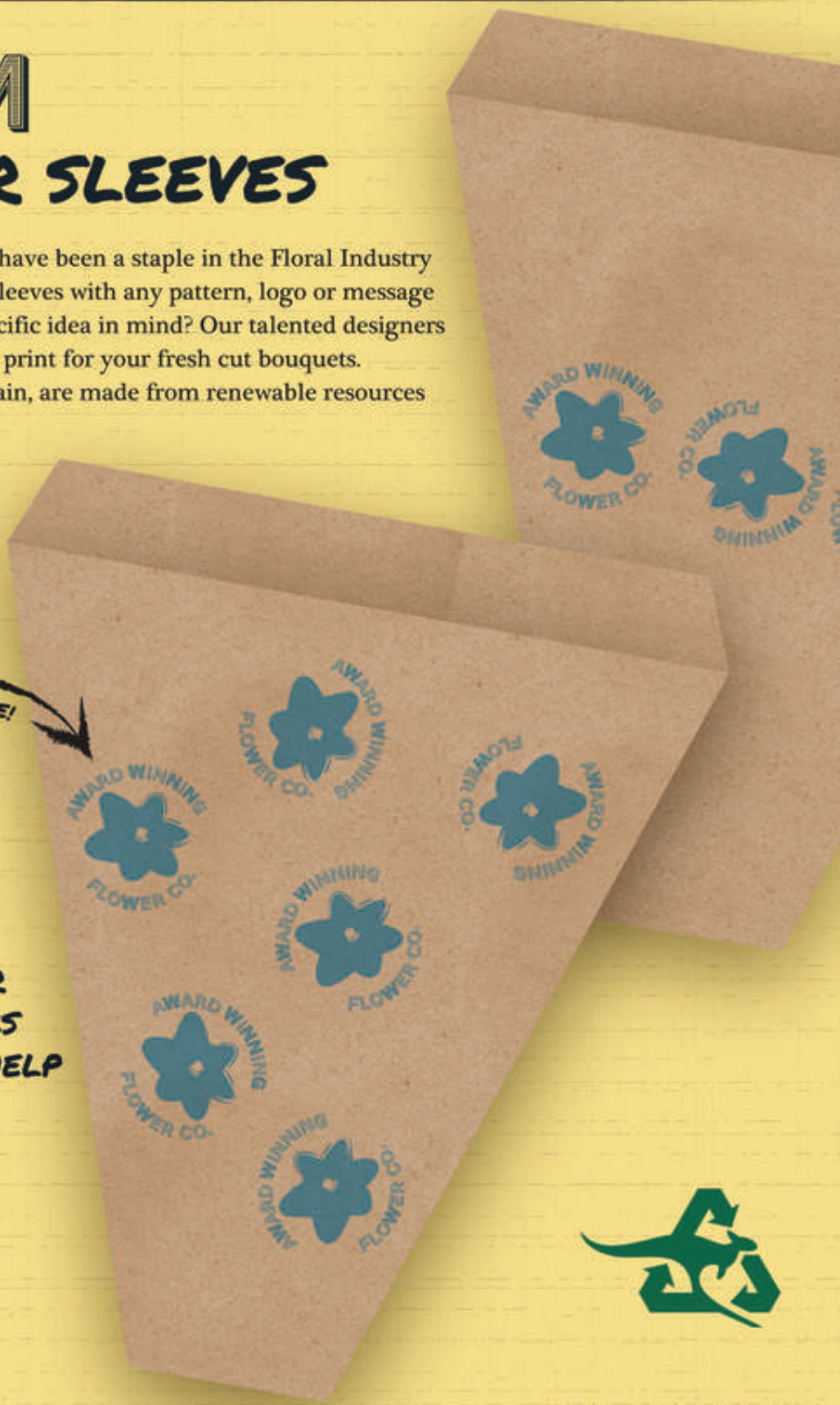
A-ROO COMPANY

OHIO · FLORIDA · CALIFORNIA · TEXAS

CUSTOM
KRAFT PAPER SLEEVES

A-ROO Company's Kraft Paper Sleeves have been a staple in the Floral Industry for years! Customize your Kraft Paper Sleeves with any pattern, logo or message for a look that's uniquely yours. No specific idea in mind? Our talented designers will work with you to create the perfect print for your fresh cut bouquets. Our Kraft Paper Sleeves, printed and plain, are made from renewable resources and are biodegradable and recyclable.

To learn more, visit a-roo.com or call your A-ROO Company Sales Representative to order today!



KRAFT PAPER IS POPULAR AND TIMELESS AND WORKS WITH MANY DESIGNS TO HELP GIVE THEM AN ORGANIC LOOK AND FEEL!

ADD YOUR DESIGN TODAY!

OH: (440) 238 - 8850 | FL: (305) 463 - 7011 | CA: (760) 724 - 2766 | TX: (830) 372 - 4770

@AROOCOMPANY

The Farmer and the Florist

Notes from the Team

Ellen Frost and Laura Beth Resnick

Introduction from Laura Beth

I was 23 years old when I started Butterbee Farm. Fresh from inspiring but low-paying apprenticeships on other farms, I didn't have any savings and was close to broke. That first season of Butterbee, I farmed a little but mostly worked other jobs. I made lattes, babysat, fed people's pets, did secretarial work—and best of all, Ellen gave me hours at her shop.

Working at the shop was eye-opening. I got to see how florists spend their time, and what I learned surprised me. I had no idea that ordering flowers takes many hours each week, and sweeping up flower clippings and washing vases is done almost every day. I learned what florists need from me, their grower, and what I can do to make their lives easier.

I also got to see Ellen create and manage her team. She made time for fun, or wove it into work if things were busy. WTMD (our local radio station) always played tunes in the background, staff chatted about their lives while they made hand-tied bouquets, and there was almost always a box of doughnuts or cookies on the counter.

What I learned from working at Locoflo continues to inform how I manage and how we do business with our customers. Maybe that's why it feels so easy to share our team—I learned much of what I know about creating a workplace from Ellen! Any of our staff can easily step into roles at Locoflo, and vice versa.

That seamlessness came in handy during the pandemic. When Ellen needed help getting a zillion orders out the door those first few weeks of shut down, the Butterbee Team headed over to the shop to get it done. When we were short on staff because our interns couldn't come to work, the Locoflo team was available to help on the farm.

All of this wonderful synchronicity depends on having great people. We are unbelievably fortunate to have Jess, Liz, and Brittney on our teams. Each of them brings so much energy and love of life to work, and each has a diverse skill set that enhances our businesses. We thought it was time you heard from them. Enjoy!

How long have you been working at Locoflo and Butterbee?

Jess: I've been at Locoflo for 3 years October 2020—I feel like it's been so much longer! I've been at Butterbee officially since April of 2020 but in 2018 I trained for the season once a week at Butterbee Farm through the Beginner Farmer Training Program (level 2) of the Future Harvest Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, so I'm no newbie to the crew.

Liz: I started working at Butterbee Farm in March of 2019 and have been ever since. Local Color Flowers was then gracious enough to invite me into the studio on 4th of July last year and begin to teach me the ways of floral design. I have mostly done studio cleaning and deliveries during my time there, but also dabbled in some holiday wreath making.

Brittney: I started working at Locoflo in 2015—five years, wow! I've had varying schedules during my time at Locoflo, sometimes holding a regular weekly schedule, and other times filling in on busy weekends and for wedding installations, etc. I was a trainee at Butterbee Farm in 2016, and I've filled in here and there since then. I feel like I've had some involvement in Butterbee since the beginning, LB is one of my good friends so I'm always aware of farm happenings, even seasons when I haven't worked at the farm!

Not everyone is cut out for both design and farming (for example, Ellen and LB don't envy each other's jobs). How did you get the skills to do both kinds of work?

Jess: I just like working with my hands. Before diving into local flower farming and arranging I worked as a visual display artist, and before that went to art school so I feel like flower arranging comes naturally to me. Flower farming is just like another material to me, another way of creating, making something appear, problem solving, I think that is why I gravitate to both.

Liz: I would like to think I have always been a creative person and I always love an opportunity to design, but I definitely know more about farming at this point. That being said, there is always more to learn, even when you are beginning to feel comfortable.

Brittney: I started flower farming at the exact time I met Ellen and started to learn floral design, so both practices are intertwined for me. Learning flower farming and design simultaneously has been a great joy, and has helped me excel at both jobs. I have an eye for harvesting flowers, flower trends, flowers, and foliage that work well in arrangements, etc. from my work at Locoflo. I have an understanding of seasonality, postharvest handling, growing practices, and the regional farm community from my work at sustainable flower and vegetable farms, including Butterbee.

What is your work week like during COVID? How is it different from before COVID?

Jess: Mondays and Tuesdays I am at Butterbee Farm, and besides COVID-19 carefulness there's nothing different for me because of it. Although I started right as COVID-19 took off, because of my role at the farm my days there are totally normal. It has actually been really weird having normal days while the rest of the world is losing it from being cooped up.

Wednesdays through Fridays I shift gears and work at Locoflo. Pre-COVID-19 (oh, how I miss it so much) my schedule was pretty much 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Fridays as we filled our normal flower subscriptions, single orders, and wedding prep. Most of the time it would be me, Ellen, another designer, named Stacy, and Eric working together. Occasionally I'd work into the evening on Wednesdays for our Wednesday night Open Studio, where anyone was welcome to drop by and hang with flowers and friends. I would also work Saturday mornings when we open up our garage doors to the farmers' market crowd and end the day with a wedding delivery

Post-COVID-19 is a lot quieter. Since we have only one designer in the studio at a time we have been working in shifts to get all of the work done, and people really want flowers right now! I work 10 a.m to 6 p.m. because one of our designers, Monica, has been working early mornings before I get there. We have finally finessed our routine and my delivery trips are all set up for me. Almost everything has been made and labeled (so many labels when working separately together), and Eric

puts the orders into the most efficient delivery routes. I go through the orders and double-check that we have everything right. I make whatever orders were not made yet, check vase water, take photos to send to Ellen, load up the van, and head out on trip one of sometimes two to three delivery trips of the day. Throughout my deliveries I report back to Ellen who I imagine anxiously waits to hear how they are going. If I have my phone on me I'll send her photos of the cute handwritten thank-you notes that get taped to empty buckets waiting for us to fill them, or photos of me eating candy or fresh baked cookies that customers have left out for me, mostly to brag. This repeats on Thursday and Friday.

Liz: COVID-19 has 100% changed the flower game. I am sure at this point you personally or someone you know has had a wedding cancelled, postponed, or minimized. We are still selling, but in a much different context than before. Orders are no longer placed as far in advance. We are getting requests much more last minute, and we must be agile enough to respond and be able to accommodate the new work flow. We moved our on-farm seedling sale to online. This totally changed our work; we shifted into propagation work and seeding almost nonstop. Then when May began to crawl in, we had to pull over 150 custom orders and prepare them for delivery. Now we are nearly back into a regular farm rhythm, but orders show up out of the blue and we need to pivot. It helping us grow—it's a challenge that we are facing every day. It's making us better and helping us refine systems. Above all, we are implementing more safety practices and trying to communicate more clearly every day.

Brittney: My work week is crazy! I'm in a landscape architecture graduate program at Morgan State University, so my schedule shifts and changes several times throughout the

year depending on my class schedule. I'm about to start two summer classes, and I'm juggling other school-related responsibilities throughout the year such as internships, projects, and research. I am very thankful that Locoflo and Butterbee have always been understanding and flexible with my schedule. Some COVID-19-related changes in my 2020 spring and summer schedule have allowed me to dedicate more time to working at Locoflo and Butterbee. Right now I work about 8-16 hours a week at Butterbee and 8-12 at Locoflo.

What is something really great about working both on the farm and in the studio? What's something kind of hard about it?

Jess: The best thing about working at the farm and the studio is following the flowers from farm to arrangement to delivery or (pre-pandemic) event. I just feel so connected to the flowers, even though it's such a short length of time with them from harvest to arrangement. When harvesting I am thinking about the quality of the stem and how excited the designer will be, and when designing I'm thinking about how excited the customer is going to be; it is just the best all around.

Hmm, I'm not sure they really share a common "kind of hard" for me. They are different in a lot of ways. The hardest part of farming for me so far is how physical it is—maybe I'll gain some more farm strength and stamina this season but usually after my Mondays and Tuesdays at Butterbee I am wiped. For Locoflo I think it would be customer expectation. I'm always a little on edge when handing over an arrangement or placing a bucket. I know what went into growing it, making it, how long it will last, and why they are priced the way they are but right now it's harder to educate customers, or have that customer connection since it's basically through text messages or email. I don't get to see people's reactions to things because I'm just dropping arrangements off on doorsteps. So sometimes it takes a few text messages back and forth with a customer to help them realize their ranunculus will open up and it will blow them away!

Liz: I absolutely love seeing the life cycle of the product. Last year, we would work with brides for DIY weddings, but most of the time we thought in terms of the flower ending its life at the florist. A lot of times now, we know each person our flowers go to as we do more deliveries. Whether we are tagged in an Instagram post or get an email or text, there is greater connection. The hardest part would definitely be the shift in paces. Often times I find creative work can be difficult to rush, while on the farm there are always a million and one other things that need to get done, and time is of the essence. I love both and together they help me keep balance.

Brittney: The sense of community that both Ellen and Laura Beth have created around local flowers and their businesses is the best part about working at Locoflo and Butterbee. Although we haven't be able to gather due to COVID-19, Ellen and Laura Beth have continued to foster a sense of community among staff and the community with initiatives such as social media meetings and design demos, Locoflo's The Bucket, and Butterbee's spring plant sale. The hardest part is juggling my crazy schedule between school and multiple jobs. Also, working outside in the summer heat is hard for me! My favorite weather is cool and misty, so I much prefer to work outside in the spring and fall.

Farming and floral design are both really physical. What do you do to stay healthy working on your feet all day?

Jess: Now that I have farming in the mix of my work week, I haven't done any working out. But I also just don't stop. On the weekends I usually am farming and gardening at my own house, working on house projects, or art projects. Lately when my body has been wanting a release, I'll find time to do some yoga. Stretching is so good! I also just purchased roller skates that I am counting down the seconds until they are delivered! I just realized maybe I can practice at the Locoflo studio on our smooth floors!

Liz: This season I picked up a workout routine to help me from getting as tired during the work day at the farm. I started back in January, so that I would be in shape by the time work on the farm started in March and have been upping my repetitions ever since. These days I run, half a mile from my home to Patterson Park in Baltimore. I follow that up with 30-50 minutes or high intensity interval training including 180 knee push-ups daily. Then depending on the weather and how I am feeling, I round it out with another mile or two. This is intense. I would never have expected to be doing this a year ago, but I am more capable on the farm and I find myself feeling much better. Starting small is the key.

Brittney: I've tried to maintain a regular running practice for most of my adult life. Usually I run for a minimum of three miles. I also love to walk. When gyms are open, I really enjoy spin classes. I prefer to stand than to sit, so working on my feet all day has never been a problem for me. Farming is very physically demanding, I'm usually very tired after returning home from a full day of farming.

What's your favorite flower to cut? What's your favorite flower to design with?

Jess: I like harvesting snapdragons; it's very clear cut when they're ready to harvest. To design with…is SO HARD TO CHOOSE, I feel like it could change at any time. Liz asked me this question the other day and I said delphinium for some reason! But today I'll say butterfly ranunculus—it makes everything better.

Liz: I love nigella, it's so easy to cut, strip, and looks like magic. But the best parts are after blooming it turns into a pod and then the seeds turn into the most wonderful spice. I am all about the edible component. For design, I have always loved peonies. They have that incredible smell and they can make nearly any rose stand down in a beauty contest.

Brittney: It's hard to pick my favorite flower to grow and design with—my opinion changes so many times throughout the season. I have sentimental attachment to flowers: tulips because of my wedding bouquet, cosmos because they are the first flower I successfully grew and sold (to Ellen!), foxglove because I saw it growing wild along the narrow curvy roads of Ireland on my honeymoon. If I had to pick just one, it would be tulips. I really enjoy harvesting tulips—digging the bulb during harvest is fun. They are great to design with because there are so many unique varieties!

Same question, but for foliage?

Jess: I have been enjoying harvesting ninebark, it is so amazing. I also love using ninebark in designs; even though its burgundy foliage doesn't say "spring", adding ninebark to an arrangement with other bright green foliage and spring pastels just makes it look so sophisticated.

Liz: This is not even a question—I love cutting raspberry foliage. If you are lucky there are big juicy raspberries for the sampling, but only if you aren't in a super hurry. I could eat all the raspberries in the world if anyone would let me. Then for design, 'Ruby Silk' grass. It's so romantic. I couldn't imagine something more fun.

Brittney: The wide variety of foliage and its varying colors, scents, and textures are some of my favorite things about designing with what's available locally and seasonally. There are too many great foliage options to choose just one: blooming branches in the spring, mint, ferns, nandina in the fall and winter—it's all so great! Asian spicebush (Lindera glauca var. salicifolia) from Wollam Gardens does come to mind. It's special because we get only a handful of branches every fall, it's not widely available, and it's harvested when the amazing faded yellow leaves are already dried on the branches.

Both Locoflo and Butterbee are REALLY into snacks. Who has better snacks (choose very carefully), pre-COVID-19 era?

Jess: Everything must be a competition with you people! You know no matter what we choose we will never hear the end of it. I am just going to say it…Locoflo.

Liz: In order of self-preservation, I will refrain from answering this question. All snacks are always appreciated. That being said, there could always be more snacks.

Brittney: I would like to continue to receive snacks from both Butterbee and Locoflo, so I'm not going to choose a side. LB has great health food snacks, she's also generously been making me amazing kombucha for years. Ellen and Eric always have amazing baked goods: cookies, cakes, oh—and always fizzy water!

Conclusion from Ellen

The community that Laura Beth and I have built together between our teams is a really special part of why I love my job so much. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to work with, grow a business with and share a passion for local flowers with these amazing women. What could be better?

Ellen Frost is owner of Local Color Flowers.
Contact her at ellen@locoflo.com

Laura Beth Resnick is owner of Butterbee Farm.
Contact her at butterbeefarm@gmail.com

GeoSeed
Seed For Professionals

Excellent Customer Service
Fast Delivery Time
Hard to Find Varieties

Lisianthus
Soiree Heart

121 Gary Road
Hodges, SC
29653
Phone: 888-645-2323
www.geoseed.com
Email: svc@geoseed.com

Your source for outstanding flowerseed

SunflowerSelections.com™
QUALITY SEEDS FOR PERFECT FLOWERS

ORDER ONLINE
NOW FOR 2020

SunflowerSelections.com™ has added ProCut®Gold Lite DMR for 2020. Our breeders are at the forefront in cut sunflower innovation offering more than 50 sunflower choices. SunflowerSelections.com is dedicated to creating new sunflower growing experiences.

Visit us today.

SUMMER WINE® Black *Physocarpus*

Dark, black foliage and a compact habit makes this the most striking, and useful ninebark yet!

FIRE LIGHT® *Hydrangea paniculata*

Upright panicles transform from pure white to pomegranate red as the season progresses.

INVINCIBELLE® Series *Hydrangea arborescens*

Five fabulous varieties, all reblooming, all with strong, supportive stems and reliability that makes grandmother 'Annabelle' proud.

GINGER WINE® *Physocarpus*

Foliage delivers rich hues of orange, red, and bright burgundy in summer with large, white flowers in spring.

LET'S DANCE® RAVE® *Hydrangea macrophylla*

A strong, reliable reblooming hydrangea with heavy bud set. Mophead blooms range from rich violet to intense pink.

LIME RICKEY® *Hydrangea arborescens*

Cool, lime-green mophead blooms sport showy pink pollen on super-strong stems.

Invest in style

Plant now, and you'll fill your buckets and bouquets with a reliable supply of flowers and foliage for years to come. Easy to grow and requiring minimal labor, they're ready to use whenever you need them - all season long. At just pennies per stem, that's one stylish investment.

Available at Spring Meadow Nursery. Call 800-633-8859 to request a catalog.
Ask about our Quick Turn™ liners for a faster crop.

Spring Meadow.

From Beef to Blooms

Jodi Helmer

Washington cattle ranchers "moo-ve" into flower farming

There are almost no similarities between raising cattle and growing flowers but that didn't stop Jim and Katie Haack from making the move.

In 2010, Jim, an architect-turned-cattle rancher, and Katie, a photojournalist-turned-farm operator, started raising Belted Kingshire cattle, a miniature cattle breed developed in the Pacific Northwest known for its excellent flavor. All the cattle raised on their Duvall, Washington, farm are Certified Grassfed and Animal Welfare Approved.

While the beef is in high demand, the high school sweethearts knew that in order for the farm to be environmentally and economically sustainable, diversification was essential. Jim thought adding vegetables to the mix was a logical step but Katie wasn't convinced.

"Katie said, 'Kale doesn't get me up in the morning,'" Jim recalls.

Cut flowers, she said, were a better—and more lucrative—option.

"Flowers have a high per acre value," Jim explains. "We can generate a lot more income from three acres of flowers than we can from three acres of beef."

Katie Haack

Post-its and the Bible

In 2019, after taking Floret's online course, the Haacks transitioned a half-acre plot on their farm, Wild Canary Farm, into cut flowers. Erin Benzakein of Floret provided the roadmap the couple used to get started.

Based on the Floret formula, the couple created a bouquet recipe—50 percent filler, 30 percent disks or round-headed flowers and being disks 20 percent split between spikes, the focal bloom, and airy elements—and built out their seasonal plan based on that formula.

"We used colored Post-it notes to lay out our field and fiddled with it until we had the right mix," Jim recalls.

The husband and wife team used the information to create a handbook, which Jim calls "the bible", to guide them through the season and ensure all the seeds are started, and plants moved to the field at the right times.

The farm is located in a floodplain. Although Jim and Katie chose high spots of land for their fields, and the worst of the flooding happens during the winter months when it has little impact on their crops, it is not uncommon for cut flowers like narcissus, nasturtium, monarda, dianthus, and celosia to be underwater.

During the rainy season, the couple decamps to a tiny house nestled among the dahlias. The house, which is used as an Airbnb rental for guests who want to experience life on a cut flower farm when the weather is pleasant, also provides the Haacks the only access to the farm when the flooding starts. Without it, Jim says "We'd have to kayak in and out."

Driving Demand

Katie knew that growing great flowers and tending to them in all types of weather was not enough to ensure success.

Wild Canary Farm is among an ever-increasing number of flower growers in the Snoqualmie Valley, and competition at local markets was intense. So, in addition to focusing on beautiful blooms and bouquets, they also prioritized marketing. The solution: The Wild Canary Flower Truck, an adorable mint green truck with roll-up sides that turns into a one-of-a-kind market display.

"When we come to the farmers' market, we come with an eye-catching flower truck that helped us stand out from the other farms," Katie says.

During their first season, Wild Canary Farm sold their flowers through local farm stands, two small farmers' markets, and partnered with a local farm co-op that offered CSA subscriptions; their bouquets were an "add-on" option for subscribers.

Partnering with existing farms allowed the couple to benefit from an existing subscriber base and infrastructure to expand their reach and connect with new customers. Adding cut flowers to their offerings also helped local farmers provide a value-added product to their customers without adding new crops or increasing their workload.

In 2020, Jim and Katie significantly increased the number of flowers growing at Wild Canary Farm, expanding the field of summer annuals by 50 percent, and adding one-half acre of peonies and one-third acre of dahlias; the farm also has two high tunnels for season extension. They park their truck at two large farmers' markets, selling bouquets to the masses; their flowers have also been sold to florists and supermarkets.

Coping with COVID-19

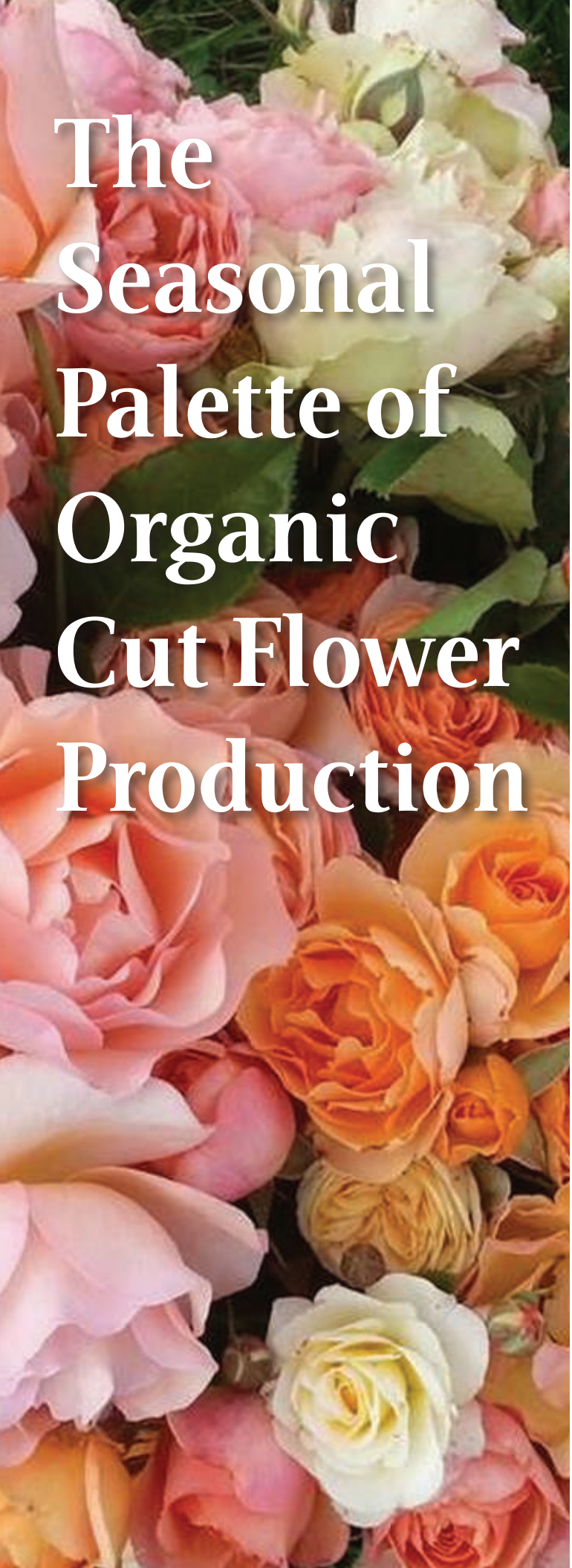
The COVID-19 global health pandemic sparked enormous growth. Jim, who says a cut flower farm is the perfect spot for social distancing, believes that news headlines about food shortages and supply chain issues have increased awareness of the importance of supporting local agriculture, including flower farms.

"The demand has been incredible," Jim says. "We made more money in April than we did all of last year; if we would have doubled the number of flowers we planted in February, I think we still would have sold out." The co-op farm that offers Wild Canary Farm bouquets as part of their CSA subscriptions grew from 75 subscribers last year to 300 this year, and many customers are opting for fresh flowers alongside vegetables and eggs.

For now, Jim and Katie are tending to the farm and spending more time online engaging with customers via social media, and building their email list to expand their reach. The couple hopes to sustain the demand post pandemic and anticipates doubling the capacity next season.

"The more people who connect with our farm, the better it is," Jim says. "We really want to be evangelists for local farming."

Jodi Helmer is a freelance writer in North Carolina.
Contact her at jodi@jodihelmer.com



The Seasonal Palette of Organic Cut Flower Production

Opportunities and rewards are ripe for the picking when the crop is organic cut flowers.

Julie Martens Forney

It's no surprise that organic cut flower growers are passionate about what they do. Raising top-quality stems isn't enough for these farmers. "The spirit behind organics is that when we leave a place, it will be in the same or better condition than when we took it over," says Joan Thorndike, certified organic flower farmer at Le Mera Gardens in southern Oregon. "I've farmed this way for 28 years, and there's no question that I would farm only if I could do it organically."

Other organic flower growers share that sentiment. "There's no doubt it's safer for the environment to support organic production—and it's safer for everyone in the field working with the crops," says Cathy Jones of Perry-winkle Farm in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. "It also yields a clean product that's safer to take home."

For some growers, embarking on the path to organic flowers is a choice. Deena Miller, certified organic farmer of Sweet Roots Farm in Grass Valley, California, followed a course of study in organic, regenerative agriculture with the intention to farm organically with flowers, vegetables, and plant starts. Deena farms with her husband, Robbie. "For me, it's really important to be a sustainable grower and take into account how we're impacting the land that we're growing on."

Dr. John Dole, North Carolina State University, points out that, "to a certain extent, organic or sustainable production is often forced on many growers. Why? There are fewer traditional products available for cut flower growers to use. The broad range of crops grown on a typical farm makes it challenging to use the products that are available without potentially damaging one or more species. Plus, the diversity of species encourages many natural enemies, which growers don't want to harm."

Organic, Sustainable or Regenerative?

Buzzwords abound in organic flower growing, starting with the nebulous "green" and most recently ending with five-syllable "regenerative." If you feel confused about what it all means, you're not alone. Here's a quick rundown of the terms.

Organic: To market flowers as certified organic, growers must earn USDA certification, working with local certifiers. The certification process is rigorous, involving recordkeeping, tests and inspections. With organic certification, federal guidelines stipulate the inputs and processes allowed for growing and processing flowers. Although there is variability in how the rules are interpreted based on region and/or certifier, the certification establishes a standard. (Watch for a future article with more details on certification.)

Sustainable: More of a philosophy, sustainable growing focuses on protecting the planet. This type of cut flower growing embraces eco-minded practices that are not necessarily required to earn USDA certification. Sustainable farms are usually small and may pursue water conservation, renewable energy, eco-friendly packaging, local markets or worker-friendly environments.

Many flower growers who don't want to complete the certification process (for any number of reasons, such as cost, client base or paperwork) sell their flowers as sustainable or sustainably grown. Jones warns, though, that "sustainable is being co-opted by so many products and causes that there's no credence." Customers do recognize the word, though, and respond to it.

Regenerative: With regenerative farming, a systems approach to farming focuses on nurturing all life on the farm, from soil to laborers. It's a conservational approach that aims to increase biodiversity, regenerate topsoil, and improve the water cycle. Practices include recycling farm waste and adding compost from outside sources. Regenerative methods are well suited to small farms.

"Regenerative farming is a complex, yet logical way to farm," says Don Lareau of certified organic Zephyros Farm & Garden in Paonia, Colorado. "Nurturing the web of life from soil microbes all the way to people on the farm makes for a healthy and sustainable system that is organic, and so much more."

Which is right for you? It really depends. "I like certification because with that standard, I am conversant with someone in any state," Thorndike says. "If we all have that stamp, we're all following the same practices. We can trade information and materials, and help each other source materials. The biggest motivation for getting certification is if you're wholesaling out of your area."

Miller agrees. "You can make the case for not getting certified if you're growing only cut flowers and not trying to market produce or plant starts," she says. "You can still grow with intentionality and choice—and actually give yourself more options in terms of market outlets. By not using heavy chemicals, such as hormone regulators and fungicidal dips, we're growing flowers that are clean for everyone who handles them, from grower through supply chain to someone's kitchen table."

Sweet Roots Farm bridal bouquet, Roseann Bath Photography

At Perry-winkle Farms, Jones and husband Mike Perry have utilized organic practices for over 30 years. "We were certified organic for about five years, but then dropped it due to cost," Jones says. Despite the lack of official certification, the farm is "totally certifiable at any time. We use organic practices—that's just how we farm."

Demand for Organic Flowers

Consumers have embraced organic products from bedsheets to beard wax, but where do they stand on organic flowers? That's the million-dollar question. Over the 28 years that Thorndike has been selling cut flowers in Oregon, she's seen a steady increase in flower sales at local farmers' markets. "Half the market booth now is flowers, and people do seek out flowers regularly," she says. "There's more demand for local flowers, and for a moment the trend was people asking for organic. I welcome all of it. If I can sell more flowers, then I can preach the virtues of organic."

Jones has a similar story to tell—selling at farmers' markets for 30 years, with booth space devoted to flowers increasing from a few jars of zinnias to 50 percent. But are people asking for organic flowers? "The great irony is everyone is so concerned about finding organic vegetables and poultry—and we sell both. But no one asks about organic flowers."

"We do have customers every market who ask us if we spray," she adds. "They may have a suppressed immune system or just really care about spraying. I take time to give a little education, telling them that they're asking the wrong question. As organic farmers we have approved sprays. The right question is what are people spraying?"

Garden roses by Le Mera Gardens

I believe that a regular person who experiences the freshness of organic flowers will come back to buy more. They'll become aware that the flowers in the big box store are indestructible, which isn't natural.

Joan Thorndike, Le Mera Gardens, Ashland, Oregon

Lareau has started to see a rising consciousness at farmers' markets. "A woman last year asked where we got our flowers from, and we said we grow them on the farm. When we told her the flowers were all certified organic, she was jumping for joy and so excited to be able to buy clean cut flowers. I've had that reaction a few times in the last few years," he says. "It makes me wonder if people are finally reading *Flower Confidential* or hearing about it from Martha Stewart or Slow Flowers."

Sweet Roots Farm does at least 60 percent of their business in weddings. "In response to a bride's reason for coming to me, I usually add that by the way, we grow organically, and 100 percent of the time they say that's great. But very rarely do they say they want organic flowers," Miller shares. "Last year about a dozen florists found me because they wanted to buy local and organic, and we're becoming more of a network in those florists' minds, which is great."

"Local" is the main word that customers mention when buying organic flowers. "People are definitely interested in flowers with a lot fewer miles in them," Lareau says. Thorndike estimates that maybe 30 percent of brides who find Le Mera Gardens have specifically searched organic. "But the main draw is local flowers." Jones echoes a similar theme: "Do I see demand for organic flowers? No. Do I see demand for local flowers? Yes."

Isabella Thorndike, Le Mera Gardens

Price Points for Organic Flowers

Most organic goods give consumers a case of sticker shock with prices that far exceed conventionally-produced items. Organic flowers do not follow suit. Miller sells nursery starts and some produce, and being certified organic is very important to people with these items. "The mark-up is significant on organic versus conventional starts," she says. "I would never not be certified organic to sell starts."

With a focus on growing quality flowers, Jones says their product is higher priced than local box stores, but "we're not getting any more because they're organic." Thorndike also doesn't charge more for organic flowers. "So many organic products are priced so they're beyond the reach of the great majority of people," she says. "What we want is to get to the place where the average person is actively looking for organic flowers and can afford them.

"I believe that a regular person who experiences the freshness of organic flowers will come back to buy more. They'll become aware that the flowers in the big box store are indestructible, which isn't natural. And they'll also become aware of the seasons. The seasonal palette of the organic flower farm will bring customers back."

Julie Martens Forney is an avid gardener and freelance writer who's been writing about flower and plant production, horticulture research and consumer gardening for over 30 years. Contact her at julie@wordsthatbloom.com.

BORN IN THE OUTBACK

BRED FOR ASCFG

Southern Eucs
Cold Hardy Eucalyptus Trees

✓ Fast Growing
✓ Disease & Drought Resistance
✓ Fragrant, Fragrant, Fragrant
✓ Blue-Red-Purple Leaves & Stems
✓ Long Stem & Vase Life
✓ 12 Unique Varieties
✓ New Introductions

www.southerneucs.com
ed@southerneucs.com

NEWS & IDEAS FOR LOCAL GROWERS
growing
FOR MARKET
SINCE 1992

Celebrating 29 years
of cut flowers
in every magazine.
By growers,
for growers.
20% off any subscription
until the end of August
with code HOT
growingformarket.com

Wild Garden Seed
Organic Flower Seeds from
Shoulder to Shoulder Farm
Ecological Crop Improvement For and By Farmers

www.WildGardenSeed.com/flowers

Cut Flower Cooperatives — Stronger Together

Kevin Edberg

Michigan Flower Growers' Co-op

The cut flower business is not unlike many other parts of agriculture. Our economy is characterized by instant mobility of information and capital, and not instantaneous but awfully fast transportation of goods. In this environment, many small- and medium-sized producers can't source inputs at competitive prices, or provide the breadth of products their customers want, or have the ability to extend their market season to retain customers.

In other agricultural sectors, these challenges have often been addressed through cooperation (the voluntary collaboration of individuals), and through cooperatives (a form of incorporated business structure that facilitates economic cooperation). In the horticultural sector, you might recognize names like Ocean Spray, Welch's, and Sunkist. All are well-known international brands owned and controlled by growers, but there are numerous examples of much smaller co-ops as well. It is a model worthy of consideration by specialty cut flower growers.

What is a Co-op?

Cooperatives are functionally defined as businesses owned and democratically controlled by the people who use their services. They are usually created when a group of people all want a common "something" that none can attain by themselves. To achieve scale, and equitably share income and expenses, the group tries to meet their common needs through a business entity they all own and use together. As in any business, the owners are responsible for capitalizing and governing the business and overseeing management. But there are a few things that make co-ops different from other forms of private businesses.

The cooperative model is the only business structure with an internationally recognized set of principles and values. The principles exist to guide co-op members in the wise use of the model. Find more information at www.ica.coop/en/cooperatives/cooperative-identity

The member-owners of a cooperative are a "democratic association", where each member has one equal vote ("one member—one vote") in the important issues faced by the co-op and as described in the co-op's bylaws. This contrasts with the predominant method in other forms of business where decision-making power is allocated based on investment (such as the number of shares owned by that member).

The co-op model also rewards use of the business instead of investment. At the end of the year, surplus (or profit) is distributed back to member-owners based on the proportion of the total business done by the member with the co-op during the year, and again not in proportion to their investment.

One of the most important attributes of a co-op is that because the co-op is intended to meet the needs of member-owners, there is no incentive to take advantage of the customer. Fairness and transparency are critical to the long-term success of the business.

One of the most important attributes of a co-op is that because the co-op is intended to meet the needs of member-owners, there is no incentive to take advantage of the customer.

In other ways related to the actual operations of the co-op, there often are not major differences with other forms of business. There is need for the members to govern the business entity, typically done by a board elected from among the membership. There typically is some form of designated management responsible for the operation of the business and accountable to the board. Standard issues of business management, accounting, HR and other attributes of businesses are very similar.

Why Have Co-ops?

The International Cooperative Alliance says that co-ops exist to meet the economic, social or cultural needs of members. Often the economic needs are seen as the most important: the ability to obtain better pricing of inputs; the ability to equitably diversify production risk over geographic areas; the ability to better meet the demand of larger customers, etc. But social and cultural needs should also be considered. When individuals share among each other information about good/better/best practices or about emerging market trends, there is improved quality or ease of production. The co-op can choose to operate in a way that meets needs or facilitates participation of particular classes of members, and so forth.

Articulating the vision of the co-op is important at all stages of the business, but particularly at the beginning. Being clear about the value proposition for owner-members is key in attracting members' ownership and investment, and in shaping governance and management. As the co-op grows, it's common that the business needs to periodically reassess its value proposition and revise its vision.

How Do Co-ops Work?

A cooperative is a legal business entity, with articles of incorporation typically filed with the state, and bylaws reviewed by legal counsel and adopted by the members. Once the business is incorporated, you can get an EIN or TIN from the IRS, open a bank account, elect a board to govern the business and hire/oversee management, obtain needed business permits or licenses, sell membership shares, obtain other financing from members or other sources of capital, etc.

But the model is very flexible. You typically need a group of at least three members. Beyond that, the vision of the members determines the services that the co-op can offer, and the price needed to cover the cost of the service. The benefits of those services need to be valuable enough to member-owners to sustain ongoing use and investment in the business. Beyond that, there are few external rules about the number of members, requirements for membership, the amount of member capital required, the amount or type of management, the types of customers you want to serve, etc. The co-op should use good business development practices (a basic business plan is really helpful!) to project sources and uses of capital, and standard pro forma business statements.

Queen City Flower Cooperative

Michigan Flower Growers' Co-op

Queen City Flower Cooperative

Michigan Flower Growers' Co-op

While there are no rules, it is not uncommon for a group to start small, with board members elected by members, who volunteer to not only govern the business, but also serve as management and labor. (Equitably sharing those responsibilities is important!). Often a co-op will handle only members' products, but sometimes a co-op will arrange to handle non-member products as well, usually at a higher cost to the non-member.

A frequent point of contention is whether co-op members must sell all their products (or all of certain classes of products) through the co-op, or whether an individual member can sell through the co-op as well as independently. There are no hard and fast rules, but this clearly needs to be given thought early on. The co-op needs to be able to sell enough product at a high enough price that it is economically viable.

As the co-op grows, there often is a need for hired management, with compensation paid for from product sales. Managing the co-op's margin is really important to ensure there is adequate funding to cover the costs of the co-op's services, and to provide a price to the grower that covers full costs of production.

In coming articles I will write about the process of forming a co-op, as well as available resources to help your existing co-ops improve and expand. If you have specific questions, please forward those to Judy at mail@ascfg.org and we will try to answer them over the coming year.

Thank you to the Michigan Flower Growers Co-op and Queen City Flower Growers Cooperative for providing photos for this article.

Kevin Edberg
is Executive Director of
Cooperative Development
Services, Eagan, Minnesota.
Learn about them at
www.cdsus.coop,
or contact him at
kedberg@cdsus.coop

NEW!
GAILLARDIA aristata 'Fire Wheels'
Exciting New Perennial Varieties from Seed
Jelitto
www.jelitto.com
STAUDENSAMEN · PERENNIAL SEEDS · GRAINES DE PLANTES VIVACES
Production · Breeding · Seed Technology
USA Office: 125 Chenoweth Ln. · Louisville, KY 40207
Phone (502) 895-08 07 · Fax (502) 895-39 34 · maryv@jelitto.com
German Headquarters: P. O. Box 1264 · D-29685 Schwarmstedt
Fax 01149-50 71-98 29-27 · www.jelitto.com · info@jelitto.com

The best bulbs
and perennials
for your business

our American Roots.com

Van der Salm Farms, Inc.

35306 NW Toenjes Rd
Woodland WA 98674
Phone: 360-263-2180
Fax: 360-263-3180

Like OurAmericanRoots.com
for news and
up-to-date
special offers!

facebook

Online Courses

- Flower Farmers
- Farmer-Florist
- Florist

TheGardenersWorkshop.com

Cut flower vase life is extended when plants are produced with microbial biostimulants

This report is funded by the ASCFG Research Foundation.

Laura Chapin and Michelle Jones
The Ohio State University DC Kiplinger Floriculture Crop Improvement Program

Biostimulants can improve the quality of flowering plants

Biostimulants are a diverse group of products or active ingredients marketed to promote plant growth and stress tolerance. The use of biostimulants during production may result in higher quality plants with increased flower numbers and size, increased shoot or root biomass, and greener leaves. The active ingredients in biostimulants may include humic substances, protein hydrolysates, biopolymers, botanical extracts, and/or beneficial microorganisms. These biostimulants promote growth and crop quality by increasing nutrient update and nutrient use efficiency, or stimulate plant defense responses to environmental stresses.

The most common active ingredients in commercial biostimulants are microorganisms, including beneficial bacteria and /or fungi. While many biostimulants claim efficacy in a wide range of greenhouse crops, many produce inconsistent and unreliable results in greenhouse environments. While the application of beneficial bacteria or fungi to greenhouse production systems can improve flowering and increase the size of finished plants in containers, almost nothing is known about how these improvements to plant health may affect the vase life of cut flowers. We hypothesized that the improved nutrient uptake efficiency afforded by various biostimulant treatments would improve the postharvest quality and vase life of cut flowers. The goal of the research summarized in this article was to determine if producing plants with microbial biostimulants could extend the vase life of the cut flowers.

Evaluating the effect of microbial biostimulants on cut flower vase life

Zinnia elegans Benary's 'Giant Purple' plants were propagated by seed and grown to flowering under standard greenhouse production conditions. Plants were fertilized weekly with 75ppm N 15-5-15-CalMg. In addition to the fertilizer, plants were treated with biostimulants weekly. The biostimulant treatments included seven bacterial isolates from a unique collection of bacteria identified by researchers at The Ohio State University (OSU1-OSU7) and two commercial products (MycoApply Endo and Cease). There were also plants that did not receive any treatment (negative control). Plants were arranged in a random complete block design with one plant per treatment in each of the 12 blocks (Figure 1). Bacteria treatments (1-7) were applied as a weekly drench to the growing media. MycoApply Endo (Mycorrhizal Applications) was incorporated into the potting media prior to transplant at a 1-Tbsp per pot rate following label instructions, with no additional application. Cease (BioWorks) was applied as a weekly media drench at 2-fl oz. per 100-gal rate. Negative control plants were drenched with diluted liquid bacteria media (no bacteria added). Cease and MycoApply Endo are commercial biostimulants chosen for this experiment because we have shown that their application to bedding plants increases plant size, flower number, and chlorophyll content.

Figure 1. *Zinnia elegans* Benary's 'Giant Purple' grown in the greenhouse with various biostimulant treatments.

Figure 2. Cut flowers were evaluated in an interior flower evaluation room to determine the effect of the various biostimulant treatments during production on vase life.

Flowers were harvested between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. from each plant on the day the bloom was fully open (outermost whorl of petals was fully unfolded), stems were immediately placed in buckets of reverse osmosis (RO) water, and taken to an interior evaluation room. The interior evaluation room temperature was set to 21°C and fluorescent lighting was provided for 12 h (7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.). The average day temperature was 22.2°C, relative humidity was 50.7%, and light intensity was 16.4 µM·m-2·s-1 as collected by WatchDog 2475 Plant Growth Station (Spectrum Technologies). Stems were recut to a 30 cm length under water. The initial size was determined by measuring the diameter of the bloom and the fresh weight of the cut flower. Stems were placed in clear crystal bud vases with RO water, one stem per vase. Vases were arranged in a random complete block design to mimic the design of the greenhouse portion of this experiment (Figure 2). The vase life of each cut flower was recorded. Vase life was terminated when 50% of the petals were wilted, necrotic, discolored, or showed symptoms of disease (i.e. gray mold/ botrytis blight) or when the stem exhibited bent neck.

Microbial biostimulant treatments extend vase life

There was no difference in the cut flowering stem weight or bloom diameter and no visible differences in plants during production (data not shown). Cut flowers from plants treated with OSU2, OSU3, OSU4, or the commercial products had a much longer average vase life than the untreated (negative control) flowers. These treatments extended vase life approximately 5.6-10.1 days longer than the untreated flowers (Table 1).

The addition of beneficial microorganisms during the production of zinnia plants did not alter plant growth or scheduling as we had originally predicted, however there was a very large positive influence on the postharvest performance of the cut flowers. Treatment with beneficial microorganisms increased the vase life of zinnia cut flowers. One treatment, OSU2, resulted in cut flowers that **lasted 10 days longer** than the flowers from the untreated plants. Further studies are needed to determine how these differences are influenced by the addition of cut flower preservatives and to evaluate different cut flower species.

Treatment	Vase life (days)	Vase life Extension
OSU1	26.3	+ 5.4
OSU2	31.0 *	+ 10.1
OSU3	26.5 *	+ 5.6
OSU4	26.6 *	+ 5.7
OSU5	26.0	+ 5.1
OSU6	24.5	+ 3.6
OSU7	26.3	+ 5.4
MycoApply Endo	28.0 *	+ 7. 1
Cease	28.1 *	+ 7.2
Untreated	20.9	NA

Table 1. Vase life of first blooms collected from plants treated with biostimulants. Treatments included bacteria identified by OSU researchers (OSU1-7) or commercial products (MycoApply Endo and Cease). Asterisk (*) indicates significant difference in flower vase life compared to the untreated plants. Vase life extension is the number of days that cut flowers from treated plants lasted longer than cut flowers from the untreated (control) plants.

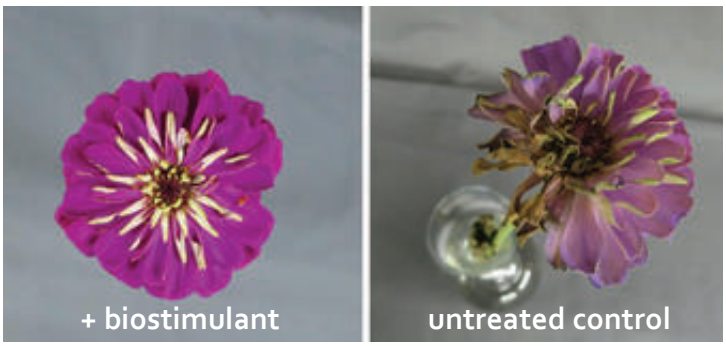


Figure 3. Example of cut flowers from treated or untreated plants 15 days after harvest.

Takii Sunflowers—Resilient and Reliable

by Jessica Cudnik

Summertime reminds us of bright days outside sipping lemonade in our garden amongst cheery blooms. Sunflowers are the delight of any garden and the joy of any cut flower bouquet. Adding a few stems to a mixed bouquet adds instant consumer appeal. An entire bunch of cut sunflowers is a bundle of joy, exactly the kind of joy and brightness we all need right now, and the workhorse in both resilience and reliability in the cut flower industry is Takii's Sunrich series.

The sunflower's history is a long one. In the 16th century it crossed the Atlantic Ocean from its native region in the Americas where it played an important role in trade. It traveled to Japan in the 20th century, where we see modern plant breeding beginning and carrying on into the cut flower varieties today.

Sunflowers have a long history of reliability and resilience; they can be grown in poor soil and all parts of the plant have a purpose. Seeds for food and oil; petals for dye and ornamental use; and leaves and stems for fuel all contribute to the usefulness of this plant. It is an important crop in people's lives.

There are both annual and perennial types of sunflower. Modern cut sunflowers are bred from *Helianthus annuus*, one of 3 main annual types. From this wild type came the first short-day flowering variety in 1969, 'Taiyou', introduced by Mr. Nakajima. Most of the next generations of varieties have been influenced or by or have used characteristics of 'Taiyou' including Takii's Sunrich series. Sunrich will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2021, and the National Garden Bureau has named 2021 the 'Year of the Sunflower'.

Takii has a reputation for breeding stability into its plants. With each evolution in breeding, Takii sunflower varieties grow in reliability and resilience. Within the Sunrich series, the shared traits of vase life, uniformity and disk shape are found in each variety. Further breeding efforts have led to the most recent introduction of Sunrich Orange DMR, a Downy Mildew Resistant variety. The added value of resistance comes in the form of less pesticide use and higher yields under otherwise high disease pressure environments.

Crop timing for a long production period is easy with Sunrich. The series offers a range of flower times; Sunrich (55-70 days) and Sunrich Summer (50-65 days) allowing you to capitalize on a long, profitable season hitting the needs of different market niches. The entire series features the reliable characteristics.

Growing cut sunflowers begins with planning. Sunflowers are initiated by day length, temperature, and light intensity. Sunrich behaves mostly day length neutral but under short-day conditions the flower bud is initiated, and under long-day conditions the flower develops on a more mature plant, and that's where you get the market-needed stem length for bouquets and arrangements. Sunrich is perfect for spring and summer cultivation: during the long days of summer you get the stem length, while the higher light intensities and temperatures lead to quality flower heads being formed.

Trends have shown us we can use sunflowers in creative ways, everything from limiting their flower size by growing them densely in crates and creating cute boutonnieres or mini bouquets, to giving them space in a field for premium, large blooms to be used in statuesque designs at your local florist. Dyeing using water-soluble colors is also a trend we cannot ignore. Our Sunrich Lime and Sunrich Limoncello Summer can be enhanced with dye to create unique or themed color schemes. We have even worked with our bicolors Ziggy and Marley to create depth and drama with dyed stems.

Sunrich sunflowers are reliable and resilient. They are easy and require no special growing considerations. We encourage you to try them out this season. From the classic orange with black disk to the exciting bicolors and green disk types, Takii cut sunflowers will help you make those cheerful bouquets that we all so desperately need right now. Spread the cheer through Sunrich sunflowers.

Keep on growing and continued health and happiness! For more information and detailed culture information, including the sunflower talk video given at the ASCFG grower meeting earlier this year, visit takii.com.

NORTHEAST

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Bailey Hale
Ardelia Farm & Co.
ardeliafarm@gmail.com

I was really hoping to get out and visit some of you Northeasterners this spring, but I've been home. You know why. I was also hoping to invite you all here to look at sweet peas this summer, but that is on hold indefinitely. Our market is primarily supplying cut sweet peas to wedding designers, but with the rescheduling of nearly every wedding in 2020 it appears we are sitting on a crop with a smaller market than anticipated. We have decided to grow a larger seed crop this year and a smaller cutting crop rather than the other way around. I think it will still be a decent season, just different.

I have to say the slowdown has been good for me. The crop plan is simpler. The staffing is less complicated. I've rediscovered some of the joy that I can easily lose when I'm overextended day after day. I've also found time to be curious again.

When a plant catches my attention, I have to admit I get a little bit obsessive. I have to learn everything about that plant, grow every variety possible, read every book, and perhaps try breeding my own. I've had plenty of plant phases throughout my life. Begonias, passion flowers, orchids, clematis, and of course sweet peas. If we add animals to the list, poison dart frogs, parakeets, Amazonian aquarium fish, and fancy chickens have all had my full focus. Living things just captivate me, and currently I have developed a bit of a crush on *Sarracenia*, the American pitcher plant.

Sarracenia is a genus of carnivorous plants native to North America. Their original range stretches in a horseshoe shape from Texas, across the coastal south, up the Atlantic coast, through New England, and then curves back to cover most of Canada and the Great Lakes. They grow in permanently wet bogs and marshes, which are nutrient poor, so they rely on the capture of insects for nourishment. There are 11 different species, and they will all cross breed readily. Three species are federally endangered and most are considered threatened in their native range. Their hybrids are also fully fertile. The "pitchers" are actually the leaves of the plant, and they do the bug capturing and eating. The flowers are as spectacular as the pitchers and should be considered for cut cultivation. *Sarracenia leucophylla*, the white top pitcher plant, is the one most commonly seen in the floral trade, with its red-veined white pitchers. There was a time when this species was widespread across the coastal South, but habitat destruction for paper production, grazing, and real estate development have decimated their numbers; 95% of their native habitat is thought to have been destroyed. The few remaining populations are especially vulnerable, and sadly, the cut flower trade is one of the biggest threats to this rare beauty. Repeated overharvesting of pitchers quickly depletes the plants' resources, leading to their demise. Never purchase cut pitchers from your floral wholesaler unless they clearly state that they were grown from cultivated stock. If there is no information on the package, assume they were taken from the wild. This is a largely unregulated practice with no accountability, but is still quite common. I know of only 2 or 3 people growing *Sarracenia* for cut production and they are doing so on a very small scale, or are just starting to explore the potential.

I have to say the slowdown has been good for me. The crop plan is simpler. The staffing is less complicated. I've rediscovered some of the joy that I can easily lose when I'm overextended day after day. I've also found time to be curious again.

There are several barriers to growing these plants on a commercial scale. Their specific culture is the first consideration. *Sarracenia* are generally grown in pots of peat moss, combined with either sand or perlite, and must stand in mineral-free water (rainwater, distilled, or reverse osmosis water). They can also be grown in in-ground bogs. They prefer full sun, and are intolerant of any amount of salt or minerals. Fertilizers will quickly kill them. They generally obtain all of their nutrition from the insects they consume, including flies, wasps, and yellow jackets. (You should try to clean out the pitchers before selling them. They will usually be full of decomposing bug bodies!).

The plants can be very expensive as they are mostly grown by specialists on a small scale. There are a number of varieties produced in tissue culture by the millions, but most of these are too short for cut production. One variety, 'Judith Hindle', would be a good candidate for cutting as it has flashy pitchers, decent height, shows good vigor, and is available affordably. Seed growing is also an option, but there will be variability in the offspring, and it can take 4-5 years from seed to create a plant that would withstand some light cutting of pitchers.

The last consideration is their slow growth rate. In one square foot of bog you could grow about 4 plants, and you might yield 4-12 pitchers from that space each season. With the wild-harvested pitchers selling for about $1 each, the profits per square foot may not make financial sense. Growing them for sale as potted plants may be a more lucrative market if *Sarracenia* also piques your curiosity.

While most of the species live in the South, and are thought of as hardy to zone 7 and warmer, *Sarracenia purpurea* extends into our zone 3 region, and grows much colder well into northern Canada. When grown in in-ground bogs there are reports of even the species from the South surviving in zone 4 conditions. Their true limits are not well established.

These plants are still in their early years of active breeding, and many vigorous, tall, showy varieties have been developed. I am working on breeding the cold hardiness of our local *Sarracenia* into hybrids with the showy Southern species. There is room for others to work with this genus, and they are quite straightforward to breed. Breeding with cutting potential in mind may result in a plant that can help take the pressure off the few remaining wild populations.

If you are working with *Sarracenia*, I want to hear from you! Let's start a study group and figure out the true potential of *Sarracenia* as a cut foliage. There is real potential in "conservation through cultivation" and it will take several similarly obsessed growers to figure out these bug eating beauties. Feel free to reach out to me at ardeliafarm@gmail.com. Thanks for nerding out with me.

MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia

Michelle Elston
Roots Cut Flower Farm
michelle@rootsflowerfarm.com

Greetings from south-central Pennsylvania! I am quite honored to be appointed as your new Mid-Atlantic Regional Director. A tremendous thanks to Lisa Ziegler and her many years of generous service to the ASCFG and to each of us as growers. I have such big shoes to fill!

I made an assumption that much of this *Quarterly* will be about COVID-19, and decided to write about something else; so here's a little bit of my personal story and perspective.

My first ASCFG meeting was in Worcester, Massachusetts, I believe in 1999. Fresh out of college, working my first real job, wrangling teenagers for John LaSalle in his dahlia field, I had never experienced so many kind people. Worcester was about an hour from where I lived, and although I cannot remember her name, one ASCFG member even offered to share her hotel room with me so I wouldn't have to drive home late at night (I was of course way too shy to accept)! This truly summarizes the generous spirit of the ASCFG!

And I'm going to go straight to an emerging topic as our membership mushrooms: membership generosity does not equal asking other people to do your groundwork. I can honestly say that my farm would not be anything without the ASCFG and all the knowledge I've gained through it. And yet, my farm and my knowledge did not materialize overnight. My farm is 14 years old, I've been growing flowers for 20+ years, and I still have sooo much to learn! Be patient, new growers! Make mistakes, run trials, do lots and lots of research, go to every conference you can, don't expect to be profitable that first year, take copious notes, make more mistakes! Tenacity is my favorite characteristic of farmers. You've got this.

Sustainability for us means growing what naturally thrives in our climate, using as few inputs as possible, having time off in winter, and always being fiscally sound.

Here are a few quick facts about me and my farm. We grow about 6 acres of flowers on our 10-acre property. Our main product is a mixed bouquet to supermarkets, but we also do design work for local colleges and businesses, bulk buckets for DIY events, attend one farmers' market, and have on-farm pop-up shops. I love the business aspect of farming and could talk numbers all day long. This year, we've got two full-time workers plus about eight part-time, all seasonal. My family is always my first priority; the shape and direction of my business is greatly influenced by this.

Sustainability for us means growing what naturally thrives in our climate, using as few inputs as possible, having time off in winter, and always being fiscally sound. My husband, Mike, has a separate landscape company. We are each other's sounding boards, but we do our best to keep our businesses separate.

And a final truth: as with many other surprises in my life, Roots is so much more than I ever could have imagined. Honestly, when I started, it was going to be just me going to one or two farmers' markets. But I really believe that when doors open, it is always best to walk through them.

The newest doorway is me writing to you! How can I serve you? How can I support you? What information do you have the most trouble accessing through the ASCFG? What unique challenges do you face in our Region? What is the best thing you get from your membership? I am truly excited to meet each of you. Email is the best way to reach me: info@rootsflowerfarm. The rest of 2020 is going to be a wild ride, without question. Let's do this together.

SOUTHEAST

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Val Schirmer
Three Toads Farm
vschirmer3@gmail.com

How our members are dealing with COVID-19: A Recap.

It seems like an eon since I sent a note to Southeast Regional members to prepare for this issue's column. I asked two quick questions: 1. How are you surviving these times? 2. What are you doing differently, and how's that going?

Who knows what things will look like when this *Quarterly* is published? It will surely feel like a year will have gone by since I sent that note, but I'm hoping the feedback I heard will be useful—and encouraging!—even giving you ideas to help deal with the situation at hand. I think I'll send out another note for the fall issue; I bet there will be even more learning to share then!

First, thanks to everyone who so quickly and candidly shared what you're feeling, what you're doing, and how it's going. Your feedback was pretty massive, so I've tried to recap key themes, touching on as many as possible. And thank you SO much for the photos—I wish I could share them all!

Question 1: How are you surviving these times?

In early March I thought, "Oh, crap, we're screwed." Now we're selling every stick or stem we have. No weddings, no farmers' market, but as little waste as I've ever experienced. I'm almost embarrassed at how well things are going. And this despite two killing late freezes and a local farmer who herbicide damaged our peony crop. But we still made more on our crop this spring than ever. **Martha White, Free Range Flowers at Martin Farm, Gracey, Kentucky**

For everyone, March was sheer panic. The fear and uncertainty came across in every email, every text. Weddings and events were postponed, cancelled or downsized. Farmers' markets closed. Florists and designers cancelled orders. Everyone was afraid to go out. Growing and selling as each flower farmer and farmer-florist had known it (or dreamed about it) was vanishing fast. But what I've learned in this is that we're not made for giving up, for just sitting still and wringing our hands. It's like dealing with the seasons and whatever Mother Nature throws our way… we adapt and try new things.

Here's a recap of what Southeast Regional members thought—*and did.*

Question 2: What are you doing differently, and how's that going?

This pandemic has pushed us to do things with our business we had been putting off for months and years even! We've sold out of our pre-order and market flowers every week, hitting sales I didn't think were possible after only one year farming. COVID-19 has us scrambling to change crop plans and looking in even more creative ways to grow our business. **Kayla Gregory, Well Rooted Farm, Winston-Salem, North Carolina**

Contactless and porch deliveries

We decided to try this, posted it on the farm's Facebook page and received 70 orders in just over 24 hours. **Jennifer Logan, Whimsy Flower Farm, Blairsville, Georgia**

Contactless delivery is pretty easy when they pay on the website. We've had more people sign up for subscriptions this year than ever before. **Linda Bradley, Purple Tuteur Farm, Blythewood, South Carolina**

I've got this really cute flower rack we put on the porch, and people can swing by, grab their pre-paid bouquet and leave. I usually sell out this way. **Alexis Sheffield, Wild Roots, Harrodsburg, Kentucky**

Farm pickups

My plan all along has been to set up a farm stand. I did a little research before this got so serious through our "Next Door Neighborhood" app and had around 80 responses in favor of stopping by here to pick up bouquets. **Sheila Walls, Walls of Flowers, Fisherville, Kentucky**

Kayla Gregory, Well Rooted Farm, doing contactless deliveries.

Alexis Sheffield, Wild Roots, used a really cute flower rack for her pre-paid porch pickups.

Before the virus, we felt like things were taking off. Now, we've shifted to all on-farm, no-contact pickup. We didn't think many people would take us up on it, but we've had a steady stream of customers willing to drive 30 minutes or so to get to us, buying our grower's choice $65 buckets. Keeping social distancing, we've led one-family tours around our field. Moms really love getting their kids out to the country. **Natalie Lyons, Millwood Flower Farm, Reddick, Florida**

Mother's Day was HUGE

This was our biggest Mother's Day, by far. We had buckets of orders and two weddings. **Diane Norris, Copper Sky Farm, Huntersville, North Carolina**

We got creative with our usual Mother's Day workshop that we had to cancel and offered Mother's Day workshop-in-a-basket deliveries that were a huge hit! The basket was $75 and included a printable certificate, fresh cut florals, a vessel, clippers, apron, and instruction card. **Erica Bush, On the Hill Flower Farm, Bremen, Georgia**

Our Mother's Day pop-up (at Williams-Sonoma) was all preorders this year, with curbside pickups. The $65 bags included a vase and flowers (2 choices) and sold out in 3 days. "It was the most work I've ever done for Mother's Day but we made the most money compared to previous years." **Eileen Tongson, Farmgal Flowers, Orlando, Florida**

Adjusted our offerings

A local bakery, also a vendor at our market, reached out to me and offered to let me set up in his parking lot as a drive through. I changed from sales by the stem to $20 bunches and $40 bouquets. I did all bunches the same. If they wanted a bigger bunch, I gave them two bunches for $40. I sold out in minutes! I'm astonished, but this may be my best season yet and I'm downsizing! **Ella King, King's Country Gardens, Owensboro, Kentucky**

I increased my Bouquet Shares (my version of a flower CSA), mainly by increasing delivery availability. While I haven't had to change pick-up options, I do keep in mind the number of

people coming in for pick-up, and do what my customers have deemed "socially distanced buckets," one bouquet per bucket to make it so customers aren't handling each other's bouquets like they usually would have to. **Brinton Fox, Boone Fox Farm, Columbia, South Carolina**

I've had a lot of luck with my Seasonal Share, where customers get flowers on preset important occasions and once-a-month bouquets when blooms are at their peak. Since this is at most, once a month, I'm able to open it up to more locations that I wouldn't normally be willing to drive to every week. **Alexis Sheffield, Wild Roots, Harrodsburg, Kentucky**

We've been shipping our flowers to florists across the country for several years now and I'm grateful that we have a wider net to cast since our small mountain town relies heavily on tourism and destination weddings. We already have an established partnership with a company specializing in elopements, so we're still designing bouquets for 3-5 elopements a week. I foresee elopement and micro weddings becoming even more popular! **Niki Irving, Flourish Flower Farm, Asheville, North Carolina**

I'm making more mixed bouquets than ever. I used to sell a lot of straight bunches but am now selling curated bulk buckets instead. I have just one price point for these for simplicity, and am touched by the number of people who buy a bulk bucket to make bouquets to take to neighbors and friends! **Renee Clayton, Wild Scallions Farm, Timberlake, North Carolina**

Farmers' markets

We started taking pre-order for market so we would know how many bouquets to make. We could have sold one-third again as much if we could have physically managed to make any more bouquets. **Martha White, Free Range Flowers at Martin Farm, Gracey, Kentucky**

Mother's Day workshop-in-a-basket deliveries was a huge hit for Erica Bush, On the Hill Flower Farm.

Niki Irving, Flourish Flower Farm's bridal bouquet for a micro-wedding.

Brinton Fox, Boone Fox Farm feels like she can ride this wave into fall and next year.

Living plants have sold like hot cakes. Never did I think that this love since childhood would be putting cornbread in the oven. **Mary Alford, Alive and Digginit, Rockford, Tennessee**

We just moved across the country in January, so I had to hit the ground running. My biggest pivot due to COVID-19 is selling at a farmers' market! It's small and complies with all CDC cover recommendations so I feel very comfortable being there. It's like having my own flower shop a few hours a week! **Sarah Torgerson, Eden Roots Flower Farm, Simpsonville, Kentucky**

We have a storefront page on our website and have added more dried wreaths, lavender items, and other value-added products. We've been doing two farmers' markets for many years and they are both now drive-through markets with pre-order only. I love this style: cutting what's only necessary and no waste after the markets are over. I hope to never do a regular market style again! **Teresa Ellis, Hazel Field Farm, Worthville, Kentucky**

Opportunities to sell collaboratively

Diane Norris, Copper Sky Farm, Huntersville, North Carolina created the Queen City Flower Cooperative, gathering availability info from local growers each week and sending it via PDF to 70 designers and florists in the area. It raises awareness for the quality, variety, and seasonality of local flowers and brings the farms together, helping grow specific varieties, understand local pricing, and build moral support and friendship.

I have to say a huge thanks to Misty Moman at Tennessee Cut Flower Company in Nashville who has bought

huge chunks of our crops. Early on, when we weren't sure what was going to happen, she was willing to buy from us. **Martha White, Free Range Flowers at Martin Farm, Gracey, Kentucky**

Looking ahead, preparing for the future

We've tripled our anemone/ranunculus order for this fall, added 6,000 tulips, and are putting in another 700 peonies based on the springtime interest we received this year. **Jennifer Logan, Whimsy Flower Farm, Blairsville, Georgia**

We are busy building a new barn/studio and prepping beds for a new hoophouse. We added a page to our website so clients can pre-order and pre-pay and just pick up at the market. **Linda Bradley, Purple Tuteur Farm, Blythewood, South Carolina**

I've been an ASCFG member for a few years and have wanted to start a small business focused on woody stems and have been slowly lining up my land. The downtime from the crisis has allowed me to make more concrete actions toward my goal (prepping the field, reaching out to other farmers in the area, starting some demonstration crops). **Liz Rooks-Barber, Libby Farm, Flora, Mississippi**

Hazel Field Farm's markets were drive-through with pre-orders only . . . no wasted harvests!

Laura Mewbourn, Feast & Flora Farm, has been swamped with orders, was featured on the front page of their local paper, and is still stunned at their good fortune and the volume of product they're moving through. Nasturtiums are a new fav and people are digging edible flowers!

Nearly all my weddings cancelled; however, what I've learned is that what I truly love is the farming. The income from selling nearly every stem I grow has been so steady, frankly, I'd prefer to make regular small paychecks instead of great big, stressful ones several times a year. As a result, my business model will change. **Laura Bigbee-Fott, Whites Creek Flower Farm, Whites Creek, Tennessee**

I'm a new grower this year… yes, it was not good timing! But COVID-19 provided me with the time I needed to practice seed starting, build more raised beds for production next year, develop a system where I can keep up with what I grow, and really think about which direction I want to go. I used this time to learn more about this industry. The last few months have allowed me to catch up. **Connie Barron, Connie's Garden, Navarre, Florida**

I've never had so much demand, from both previous/regular customers and also from lots of new customers. I have the sense that I can ride this wave into fall and next year, which is encouraging. **Brinton Fox, Boone Fox Farm, Columbia, South Carolina**

I'm still stunned at our good fortune and at the volume of product we're moving through. This could easily have gone so badly, and yet we've profited enormously. It's been a crash course in moving product at a higher volume, and I'm having to revamp the way I communicate with customers and in our day-to-day processes. My employees are thrilled to that I was able to keep them on—for a few days, we sadly thought I was going to have to let them go. I just find it an amazing situation to be in. I'm nervous about the future because of its unpredictability, but, that's farming, I guess. **Laura Mewbourn, Feast & Flora Farm, Meggett, South Carolina**

Perhaps my favorite email was from **Tim Jones, Sunbliss Flowers, Cairo, Georgia:** This was our first season selling cut flowers but we exceeded our sales projections. As the great Mike Tyson said, *"All fighters go into the ring with a strategy until they are hit in the face."* COVID-19 certainly did that! We pursued contract-free pick-up and delivery and were surprised by the volume we generated simply on word of mouth. Looking forward to reading how other farms fared and whether COVID-19 was a positive or negative anomaly or sustainable market shift.

Well said, Tim, and thank you to everyone. We can't wait to see how things will look as we move through the year into next, when we can hopefully have a clearer view about whether this has been a positive or negative anomaly—or a sustainable market shift.

NORTH AND CENTRAL

Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

Jamie Rohda
Harvest Home
harvesthomeflowers@gmail.com

Happy summer to all of you! As I write this we have predicted temperatures in the 80's and 90's for the upcoming week. It was an unusually cool spring for us and I'm looking forward to some warmer temperatures to get our summer annuals going and maybe kill off some of the COVID-19 germs while we're at it!

I don't know about all of you but I'm personally a little tired of hearing about COVID-19 but considering that it's affected all of us in some way I decided to reach out to my Region's members to see how everyone was dealing with it. I first sent out a note in late March to see how folks were doing, then again in mid-May to check in with everyone. In March I felt like most people had some level of concern but were already considering various ideas for how to deal with the changing market. Almost everyone responding said that they were still planting as normal, with a few saying they were going to grow more vegetables for this summer. Overall the sentiment was mostly positive, ranging to a few having some serious concerns for the season.

As Rosie Standish noted, farmers are a resilient bunch!

By the time I sent out my second note in May the responses were overwhelmingly positive. Jessica Weatherford reported that their direct-delivered bouquets were selling out consistently. When LeAnne Lund ended up with short tulips this year she said she was still able to sell them retail in small jars. Michael Rodriquez from Michigan found that their spring bouquet subscription sold out quickly and they were able to sell every stem of their spring crops. For Teresa Brown of Rooster Ridge Farms, Karen Geiser from Ohio, and Annette Hellbusch from Nebraska, their only problem has been trying to keep up with the demand. For others it was a time to go at a bit slower pace and to have the opportunity to catch up on some projects. Jennifer Kinney of Piscasaw Gardens reported that they had an employee who tested positive for COVID-19. The plus side of the situation is that her husband and kids have stepped in to help!

From every direction I'm hearing positive reports of communities intentionally supporting local businesses. I don't pretend to know what the future holds but I'm hoping some of the positive changes that we've experienced during this time will continue on even after COVID-19 is just a distant memory.

Jennifer Kinney's family helping with the spring planting.

For us here at Harvest Home Flowers our season hadn't really started yet so we enjoyed more time at home. Norm works off farm as a respiratory therapist so he kept pretty busy but we've been fortunate here in Nebraska with the number of cases in proportion to our hospital space available. Demand for local flowers during the Easter/Mother's Day/Memorial Day time was really strong here. Unfortunately, because of some unseasonably late freezes, we lost several of our spring perennial crops so we didn't have a lot to meet that demand. Without a lot to harvest we used our extra time to plant like crazy in hopes of having a strong late summer/fall season.

In this issue I wanted to talk a bit about a small part of our business that turned into a much bigger part during this time. When we were still doing farmers' markets we sold succulents and I thought they were just a fad that would soon fade. Once we quit doing the markets I figured I would drop succulents altogether, but I just couldn't give them up that fall. I decided to keep growing them and started advertising them on a brides' Facebook page for people buying and selling all things related to weddings. Since we don't have a store on our farm and I knew I didn't want people stopping out just to buy a succulent or two, I decided to sell them by the flat.

They became quite popular, and I also started delivering flats of them to the florists on my route. My florists are using them for planters and design work. With the advent of the pandemic it seems that a huge number of people have had a lot of time on their hands and have been anxious for something to do and something to nurture. We've done a couple of pop-up sales here

at the farm where we've set tables up outside, a distance from each other, so that people could stop out and pick out their own. We sell most of our succulents in 2 ½" pots (32 to a flat) and have a few available in the larger 4" pots. At our pop-up sales people are welcome to buy them by the flat or individually. We sell our flats for $65; individually they are $3 for the smaller size and $4.50 for the larger. We also will do custom orders on request.

With a little trial and error I've learned to propagate most types of succulents, but with the demand so high this year we've had a hard time keeping up, and have had to buy in extra plants. We're fortunate to live an hour and a half from Bluebird Nursery so when I'm falling behind or just looking to add some new plants to my inventory, I can make a quick trip up there. While succulents aren't technically a cut flower, we've found that they've fit in really well with our business, and this year our succulent sales carried us through the early spring before we had many fresh flowers available. While we've tried to really streamline and simplify our farm over the past five years, I'm happy that we've kept this little side business.

SOUTH AND CENTRAL

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana,New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah

Shanti Rade
Whipstone Farm
info@whipstone.com

Farming in a Pandemic

It's hard to know where to start with an update, or what to say that will feel relevant by the time this goes to print. This has been the most roller coaster of a season for our farm business in my memory. Not to say the most difficult. That year of the major flood/hail storm combo was pretty rough. The year the twins were born, when I already had a toddler in tow—that one wasn't easy trying to farm either. But this year, it just feels like we have all been pulled in so many different directions, and it's not just an individual struggle, it's collective. We are in it together. We are reinventing ourselves, throwing perfectly good plans out the window and learning new skills. I don't want to bore you with all the ways in which we had to adapt as a business over the last 4 months because I know it is similar for so many of you. Yet, it doesn't seem like there is anything else of much importance to talk about, so I will just hit a few highlights.

Being Essential

I know it really varies by product/state/region/country, so everyone has had a different experience, but for us it really helped to know that we were an essential business. Growing vegetables and flowers put us in a prime position to be not only essential but also in demand. At the beginning of the shut-downs, everything we had was in demand: vegetables (boy, did people want to get food from people they trusted) and flowers (when all the wholesalers are shut down and every florist is your new best friend). It was great. And it was totally frustrating. Production didn't peak for us with the pandemic. We had to turn a lot of interested customers away. We didn't hire any new spring crew members because we wanted to keep our core employees as safe as possible. Sales stayed high for a long time but now seem to be tapering off. Do I feel like I have a handle on anything that is happening right now or in the near future? Not in the slightest. And as soon as I feel I have some little piece worked out, things change again.

Diversity and Trust

A few of the things I have been grateful for this year are having a diverse product stream and marketing channels. Having a loyal and trusting customer base that reads my newsletter has also been a huge help. If I hadn't had a way to communicate all the many changes happening weekly to my customers, I don't know where we would be. A pop-up on our website, autoresponder email, and an informative message on the answering machine—all those things helped as well. But, oh, the questions. The many, many needy questions that flooded in from all directions regardless.

Another thing I am grateful for is all the many partnerships we entered to make our business survive during this pandemic. Our farmers' markets were closed but the market entity immediately opened online sales, and sold fresh veggie boxes along with flowers and other products from other vendors for a "drive-through" market. Sales were great and the market kept it so well organized. We were approached by so many other business partners who also wanted to help us out and offered their spaces to sell our products. It was great to see the business community coming together.

Pushing Limits

When I heard that people were stuck at home due to COVID-19, bored and looking for ways to connect with nature, like #pandemicgardening, I immediately potted up thousands of seedlings I had intended to plant in our own field. It was a good move on my part, even though we don't usually sell bedding plants. I planned to have an online plant sale, but in the end we moved them all through the online farmers' market shop. We sold 99% of them and I could have sold a ton more.

In a panic that with no markets I couldn't sell any flowers locally, I got all equipped to ship flowers nationally. And while in the end I didn't really need to utilize that sales channel much, it got me over the fear of figuring out something new. I checked in with some flower farmers who were already shipping flowers to point me in the right direction. I got my supplies in order, website updated, and shipping logistics worked out. I shipped flowers across the country to some florist friends with great success, and now I know I can do it. It has opened up the option for us to ship flowers regularly to some of our regular florists who are a little further out of our delivery route, which has been super helpful.

One thing the pandemic can push you to do is spend a lot of money on packaging. More with food products than with flowers, the panic over contamination was a big one. Many of our wholesale customers wanted every single item individually packaged. Plus all the boxes for our veggie box market program. Plus flower boxes for shipping. I spent so much more money on packaging than ever before, which goes against my environmentalist nature. But it also kept us in business.

Social Justice

Not only are we dealing with business in the time of pandemic, but also in one of the most tumultuous political times in my memory. As a business owner I have always left politics out of my business and my social media. Lately I have crossed the line and started to speak my heart openly and share with my customers what we believe, support, and stand for, openly supporting the Black Lives Matter movement and social justice. It's been cathartic to say the least. I realize that standing up for social justice isn't political, it's human rights. With the realization that if I couldn't state my beliefs to my customers, then I was profiting off of an oppressive society was the tipping point for me. I have a voice, a responsibility, and an obligation to do the right thing, always. And honestly, for me, seeing so much collective outcry for human rights and putting people over profit has been a true gift of this year.

I have heard from many of you that flower sales are way up, even if they may look different than most years. We are all finding our new normal. I hope that you all are finding that through all the crazy changes that this year has brought, that there are also silver linings. For me it has been pushing myself to try new business ventures. Not being afraid to drop what isn't working and go big with what is working. I have learned to not be afraid of online sales or of shipping flowers. But most of all, witnessing all the many kindnesses that the human race shows up for when times get tough is keeping me going.

WEST AND NORTHWEST

Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington

Erin McMullen
Rain Drop Farm
raindropfarm@peak.org

All my life I've been a bit afraid to fail. As a small child I very seldom took the risk to jump across the creek if I didn't know that I'd make the other bank. While I may be a procrastinator (Judy, feel free to chime in here), I always got all of my work done, because I was afraid of not passing my classes. All the way through my thirties, I shied away from new things or challenges for fear of not doing them well. All I want is to be good at what I do.

This is all to say that farming has really knocked me down a few, and forced me to re-evaluate what I see as failure. So, I thought it would be fun to remind us all of those minutes, days and seasons that teach us to look for the lessons in life. I'll start.

As did many of you, I started farming with a solid background in growing things, veggies being our main crop for three years as a farm before we switched to flowers full time. Once we switched, the learning curve was steep. I started by buying all of my starts from local nurseries, figuring that anything that they had for my annual flower garden would certainly work for cut flowers. Well, not so much. I had celosia blooming at 6 inches, cosmos that didn't even make it out of the six-pack, and sunflowers that grew and bloomed before I even knew what happened (and who let me buy sunflowers as starts anyway?!). It took years of experimentation and research to find the right varieties, the right colors, the neatest foliages, but I persisted and continue to trial new things every year.

Like this year, for instance. I decided that I'd give freesia a shot. I saw those beauties that Mimo Davis was growing, and some that were coming into our markets from Peterkort Roses, here in Oregon. How hard could they be? I did a little research, planted them in great soil in crates and stuck them in my warmest greenhouse to sprout. Which they did! Slowly. Not really fast enough to justify the table space, so they got stuck under the benches, until I remembered them. Oops. Then they got moved to the hoops, where the only space was in the pathways between the dahlias and overwintered mums. Where all of the slugs live, apparently. Sigh. But still, they bloomed, and were gorgeous, and now I'm hooked. We've changed our tactic, reserved greenhouse bed space, and are going to try again. So, failure turns into an invaluable lesson.

You just can't farm without failure. Every year there's something that doesn't quite work out, and every year there are new learning opportunities and chance for growth. It's really a humbling occupation, one that allows for a fresh, new start every season. Let's take those lessons and embrace them.

Speaking of slugs, it was a particularly wet spring here in the PNW, like even more so than the usual persistent grey gloom, so my slugs are loving it. So much so that they've completely leveled a significant section of our main dahlia field. This field has been our mainstay for dahlia production for the last 3 years, and we have it pretty dialed in for production, so it got set, planted and left to do its thing while we planted the rest of the fields. When I did a walk-through a few weeks ago it was devastating to realize how far out of hand I'd let the situation get. We had to scramble to take care of the intruders and hope for the best. Those dahlias are recovering and we'll get a decent crop out of them yet this year, but we certainly set ourselves back by assuming that we knew what that field needed. That whole adage about what assuming does…

As I reflect on these scenarios, and many others, I realize that my fear of failure has blossomed and changed into a healthy embracing of the challenges of farming. You just can't farm without failure. Every year there's something that doesn't quite work out, and every year there are new learning opportunities and chance for growth. It's really a humbling occupation, one that allows for a fresh, new start every season. Let's take those lessons and embrace them. Let's share them, and help others to learn from our experiences. Let them guide us as we move forward to the next year, both in farming and in life.

Best wishes to everyone as we move through this unprecedented time, and happy growing!

CANADA

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan

Janis Harris
Harris Flower Farm
janisandmarkharris@hotmail.com

If you fail to plan you plan to fail.

When our mind is full of so many tasks and situations, it's easy to forget things. Right now, my mind is spinning with so many things. I'm sure you are in a similar spot. This column is more for me to remember and put in place the plans I need to stick to, so I don't miss deadlines or scramble to get something I need.

Use the reminders app or a note on your calendar to alert you to things that need to be done at certain times. You are super busy and before you know it, 3 weeks have passed.

A good way to remember when to order tulips is that it's just after they are done blooming. Here in southwestern Ontario tulips bloom in mid-May. Tulip orders are usually due July 1, very similar for anemone and ranunculus. They are usually ordered just after they are done blooming. That's handy because you can remember the varieties you liked. Be sure to take photos on your phone of the blooms you liked. Star them as "favourite" photos so they don't get lost. My bulb catalog just came last week. Instead of throwing it aside, I went through and starred the ones that I was instantly drawn to. I put a reminder in my phone to circle back and look through them again, as well as a reminder for the order deadline. The email for corm availability also has arrived. I flagged that email to come back to later.

Perennial and shrub liners and starts are also usually ordered in midsummer. Make notes of your favourite ones or the ones you want 4 rows of because they are so awesome. Use a notepad that you always carry with you or your phone to keep track of the superstars.

Seed catalogs usually start to come in late summer/ early fall. There are a few seed companies that have EARLY BIRD discounts. Set a reminder to look over your order and note the seeds that you are for sure going to need. Send in the order and take advantage of the discount! You are going to need them anyways.

For floral supplies, it's easy to lose track of how many you have on hand. A few tips for always having what you need. When you pile boxes of sleeves, write on the outside of the last

box "ORDER ME" or "LAST BOX". Then when you take the box above you are reminded to order them.

If you are using flower food packets with your bouquets make sure to have 2 boxes on hand. When there is only one box, order another. Same with elastics, floral glue, flower food tea bags, packing boxes, florist tape, etc. We use a local print shop for our bouquet stickers. They have my file in their system so I can just email them and tell them to do another batch. It's super handy to have a local reliable source for your consumables.

If you do successions of sunflowers or lilies start them on a certain day always. Then you know—every Monday plant 600 sunflowers.

This is one I want to adopt better: use the online grocery shopping through the summer. Set up your orders. You can schedule them weeks in advance then go and pick them up at the store. Summer is so busy. Groceries is a task that in our house gets pushed back until absolutely necessary.

I hope these few tips help. Even one of them can help you stay on track.

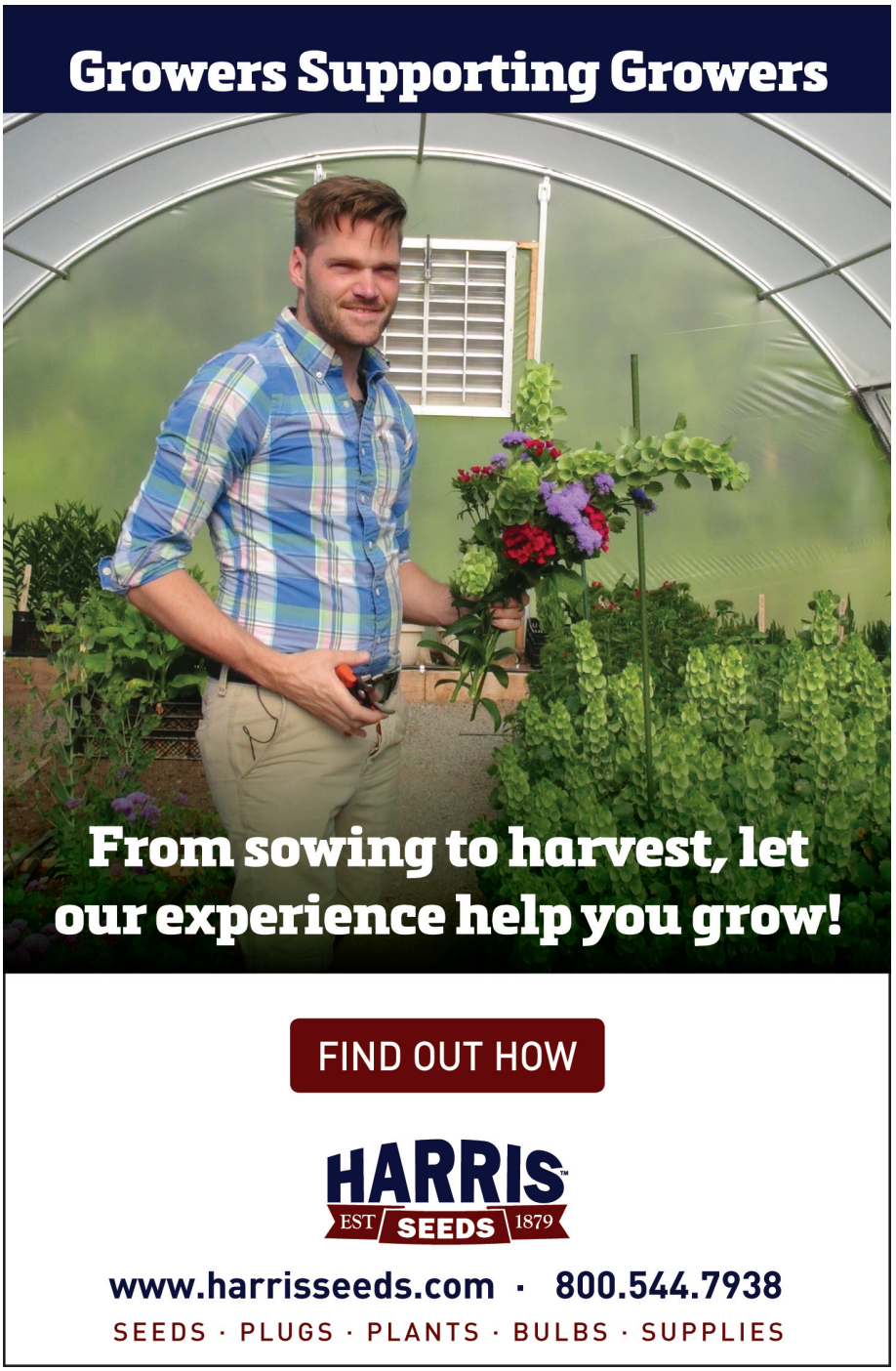
Now I have to make a reminder of when the next *Quarterly* article is due.

SAVE THE DATE
Commercial Cut Flower Educational Summer Session
JULY 28TH
8:00 am - 1:00 pm
The Perennial Farm
Registration Opens in Mid-July
Continental Breakfast and Lunch Provided
*This event is subject to Baltimore County's COVID-19 Guidelines
Sponsored by: Maryland Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Association, University of Maryland Extension, Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers and the Maryland Cut Flower Growers Association

Meet the ASCFG's Newest Members

Sarah Acorn, Acorn Family Farm, Uxbridge, ON
Kim Adkinson, Castlebridge Farm, Ellicott City, MD
Meredith Alphin, Fable Flower Farm, Suffolk, VA
Shelley Anders, Benton, LA
Don Anderson, Anderson Flower Farm, Frankfort, IN
Lois A. Anderson, Anderson Flower Farm, Frankfort, IN
Khefri Azure, Free Hand Farm, Oregon City, OR
Susan Baldwin, Susan's Garden Treasures, Chardon, OH
Jennifer Barnard, Millay and Meadowlark Flower Farm, Missoula, MT
Amanda Barrett, Chimney Top Blooms, Fall Branch, TN
Katie Beaton, Salty Flower Farm, Powell River, BC
Pamela Bosward, West Woods Flower Farm, Hamden, CT
Diane Bowman, Petals & Leaves Cutting Gardens and Nursery, Ellensburg, WA
DeAnna Bray, Good Karma Floral Farm, Athens, OH
Genica Breitenbeck, Home Front Gardens, Hyde Park, VT
Maggie Brenizer, The Flower Fields, Osage Beach, MO
Brittany Brock, The Bloomery, Sims, NC
Daniel and Betsy Brockett, Foggy Blossom Farm, Leechburg, PA
Ann Brooks-Waller, Annie's Flowers, Stumping Ground, KY
Jennifer Buck, Dancing Feathers Farm Company, Crystal Lake, IL
Jessica Butteris, Creek Bottom Farms, Stoutland, MO
Katie Byler, Greystone Manor Gardens, Lititz, PA
Jacquelyn Carder, Open Skies Flower Farm, Fredericksburg, VA
Billie-Jo Carpenter, Yellow House Farm, Pittsburg, TX
Stephanie Carr, New Leaf Nursery, Kilmarnock, VA
Crystal Carroll, KCW Farms, Thomas, OK
Lauren Casner, Rose Hill, KS
Sharon Celaya, Windmill Gardens, Prairie Grove, AR
Janny Chappell, Apex Flower Farm, Durham, NC
Stephenie Chow, Sebastopol, CA
Cassie Coffin, 41 County Farm, Osceola, NE
Rebecca Coleman, Joli Jardin, Signal Mountain, TN
Bonnie Collins, Madison, VA
Beverly Conn, Fir Island Floral Smith, Sedro-Woolley, WA
Ed Coughlin, Southern Eucs, McDonough, GA
Kristina Couser, Lost Creek Flower, Conover, OH
Chrissy Creese, Fonta Flora Flower Co., Hookstown, PA
Mara Crosby, Eagle, ID
Kris Dahl, Bogus Jim Gardens and Guesthouse, Rapid City, SD
Shawna Daley, Wild Whimsy Flower Farm, Dixon, CA
Sandie Dee, LittleBigSkyFarm, Kings Mountain, NC
Amanda DeKoker, Sage River Farms, Snohomish, WA
Jennifer Derevere, Jenny's Garden, Stephens, GA
Jill Doe, Regent, ND
Heather Dollinger, Midwest Farmerette, Mazon, IL
Diana du Pont, Birdsong Blossoms, Columbia City, IN
Karen Dugan, Escondido, CA
Amy Dunlap, Stemz, Winston Salem, NC
Amber Edwards, Smithfield, VA
Jessica Eisenmann, Iron Meadows Flower Farm, Buckley, IL
Kerri Farias, May Blooms, Floyds Knobs, IN
Shauna Franklin, Levelland, TX
Michelle Gignac, Uxbridge, ON
John K. Glick, Tender Leaf Meadow, Quarryville, PA
Kaitlin Haaning, Hagerstown, IN
Linda Halstead, Halstead Farms, Saxonburg, PA
Erin Hausaman, Hausaman, Homestead, Orlando, FL
Brenda Hayden, Hayden Flower Farm, Ottawa, KS
Rose Henderson, Dog Tired Farms, Midland, VA
Kathryn Henry, Ritual Gardens, Kimberley, BC
Heidi Hess, The Farmers Gals, St. Ignatius, MT
Rachel Hitchner, Summer's Sunshine Flowers, Millville, NJ
Margi Hsie, New Morning Blooms, Neenah, WI
Samantha Huber, O'Fallon, MO
Colleen Jamison, Austin, TX
Donald Jones, Bonita Springs, FL
Jill Kelly, Leatherwood Farms, Dabneys, VA
Michael Kilpatrick, Growing Farmers, Germantown, OH
Yeon Kim, Whispering Flower Farm, Rohrersville, MD
Meg King, Ubuntu Blooms, Suffern, NY
Amanda Kinsler, Dabble Mini Farm, Petal, MS
Terri Knapp, Gray, TN
Julie Kohl, Petals Flower Farm, Yakima, WA
Elizabeth Kooiman, The Poppy Patch, Mabelville, AR
Jenette Kreitler, Oronoque Farms, Shelton, CT
Maggie La Rochelle, Sunray Farm, Sonoma, CA
Tracey Lake, Easley, SC
Leslie Leighton, Moosehead Lake Weddings & Events, Greenville, ME
Courtney Leonard, Pueblo, CO
Teresa Lorenz, Naches, WA
Monica MacPherson, Generation Seed Farm Inc., Shedd, OR
Holly McCloud, Pocket of Poppies, Monroe, NC
Jane McDonald, Thousand Flowers, Parkville, MO
Allison McDonough, Flower Hound Farm, Gilbertsville, NY
Brenda McGregor, Runnells, IA
Mary Martha Meyer Hill, Persephone Floral Design, Austin, TX
Heather Dawn Miller, Utah Flower Farm, Holladay, UT
Christy Mitchell, Kumquat With Me Farm, Sebree, KY
Vanessa Moore, Bakersfield Blooms, Bakersfield, CA
Judy Mortimer, Reminisce Flowers, Idaho Falls, ID
Tracy Munoz, Stafford, VA

Colleen Musgrave, Blooming Meadows Farm, Watsontown, PA
Michael Myers, Williamstown, NJ
Christine Nelson, Sterling, MA
Tina Nelson, Flowers 4 the People, Madison, WI
Bay Nordstrom, Bay Meadow Farms, Suttons Bay, MI
Lindsey Norton, Indigo Blooms, Killingworth, CT
Bernadette Ouellette, Bouquets de Bonheur, St-Hyacinthe, QC
Monica Pugh, Floras & Bouquets, Sioux Falls, SD
Carly Reed, In Bloom, Georgetown, KY
Nicolle Ritchie, Preston, ID
Susan Rommelfanger, Rommey Farms, Cassoday, KS
Aviva Rosenberg, Concord, NH
Emily Round, Grounded Flower Farm, Hampstead, NH
Erin Rowlett, Mugwort Farms, Lancaster, CA
Chloé Roy, Floramama, Frelighsburg, QC
Susan Sand, Der Bauernhof, Mount Eden, KY
Kari Schroeder, TX Stems, Floresville, TX
Maggie Sehnert, Marthasville, MO
Karin Skalla, Glenerie Farm, Saugerties, NY
Jennifer Smith, Fir Island FloralSmith, Mount Vernon, WA
Stephanie Smith, Petals & Pigs Flower Farm, Aumsville, OR
Rhonda Snyder, Red Barn Farm and Flowers, Navarre, OH
Andrea Spencer, Mulberry Ridge Farm, Stanton, IA
Diane Stackley, Southern Stems Flower Farm, Moncks Corner, SC
Cathy Stansbury, Hurst Flower Meadow, Kalispell, MT
Leslie Stevens, Silver Linings, Dresden, ON
Donna Stricklin, Valley Head, WV
Deana Sublett, Sublett Farms, Hazel Green, AL
Colleen Taugher, Melliflora, Troy, ID
Jessica Taylor, Here and There Farm, Wellfleet, MA
Erica Teveris, Woodland Florals, South Glastonbury, CT
Alexis Thomas, Doodles and Bloom Specialty Cut Flowers, Edmond, OK


Growers Supporting Growers
From sowing to harvest, let our experience help you grow!
FIND OUT HOW
HARRIS
EST SEEDS 1879
www.harrisseeds.com · 800.544.7938
SEEDS · PLUGS · PLANTS · BULBS · SUPPLIES

Leah Thompson, Stumpmunk Farms, Sisters, OR
Macy Thompson, Orange Grove, TX
Ashley Thoreson, Arlington, WA
Miki Tucker, Grassroots Farms, Pauls Valley, OK
Evelyn Weitz, Sweet Hill Flowers, Polk City, FL
Jessica Welling, FloraQuest Farm, Redwood Valley, CA
Elizabeth Wescott, Lizzy Lou's Family Farm, Currie, NC
Bronwyn Wheeler, Island Flower Farm, Qualicum Beach, BC
Sasha Willard, Red, White, & Bloom, Moncks Corner, SC
Cricket Willis, Growing Up Peaches, Grovetown, GA
Chloe Wilson, Chloe's Flower Farm, Falls City, TX
Katie Wolter, Nourish Blooms, Opelika, AL

These Members Have Been with the ASCFG for Ten Years!

Jim and Deb Barron
Red Barn Farm,
Prescott, WI

Joost Bongaerts,
Florabundance, Inc.,
Carpinteria, CA

Kristin Burrello
Muddy Feet Flower
Farm, Ashford, CT

Jim Cameron
Destiny Hill Farm,
Washington, PA

Nancy Cameron
Destiny Hill Farm,
Washington, PA

Tanis and Rick Clifton
Happy Trails Flower
Farm, Dennis, MS

James Daly
Smithers-Oasis
Floralife, Walterboro, SC

Tracy DiSabato-Aust
Sunbury, OH

George and Marcia Hart
Hart's Garden and
Nursery, Missoula, MT

Thomas Hurtgen
Hurtgen Meadows
Farm, Hillsborough, NC

Karen and Mark McVay
Cat Run Ranch Flower
Farm, Newark, OH

Cindy Oliver
R/C Flower Farm,
Athens, TX

Annie Perkinson
Flying Cloud Farm,
Fairview, NC

Seth and Caitlin Roberts
Weathervane Farm,
Buena Vista, CO

Carole Smith
Smith & Smith,
Dayton, NV

Carolyn Snell
Carolyn Snell
Designs,
Bar Mills, ME

Karen Volckhausen
Happy Town Flowers,
Orland, ME

Beth Weaver
Black Dog Farm,
Baroda, MI

Photo unavailable

Michael Makinajian
Makinajian Farms, Inc.,
Huntington, NY

Jeff Nameth
Fred C. Gloeckner & Co.,
Arden, NY

The ASCFG Facebook closed group is one of our most-used and popular member benefits. Valuable information and personal experiences in cut flower production and marketing have been shared for years, along with helpful photos and videos.

We are fortunate that our members are so generous with their knowledge, and thankful that since the group's inception, discourse has been respectful and honest. However, in the very limited chance that a discussion may include offensive material, the Admins of the group will quickly take action, as outlined below.

Currently the Admins are the two ASCFG staff members. We are looking for others to help monitor the page. If you are interested, please contact the office at mail@ascfg.org

ASCFG Closed Group Facebook Page
Admin Guidelines

Admins for this group should include no fewer than three, but no more than nine people, including staff, board members, and other volunteer ASCFG members ideally from different ASCFG Regions. The Admins are approved by the Board of Directors, and should serve at least a year in the position.

Admins are not responsible for adding members to the page; staff sends new ASCFG members invitations to join the group, and approves requests accordingly. Inactive members are removed from the group if dues are not paid within a reasonable time.

Admins should do their best to monitor the page daily, including checking Notifications and Messages. If the Admin considers an original post, or replies to that post, to be counter to the ASCFG's goal of educating and uniting cut flower growers, or to be a racist, discriminatory, homophobic, transphobic, or a personal insult or attack, these steps should be followed:

- A screenshot of the post or posts should be taken and shared with all Admins.
- All Admins will discuss whether the post(s) violates the ASCFG's Facebook User Guidelines. If so, the post(s) should be removed, and the author contacted.
- If the author agrees the posts(s) were out of line, and to not repeat the behavior, the author may remain a member of the Group. If confrontation or other unpleasantness ensues, the member will be removed from the Group.

Our interactive Facebook live events have become useful exchanges of information. Take advantage of these opportunities to ask questions of cut flower experts in real time on the second Monday of each month, 8:00 p.m. eastern time. Don't forget these Live events are saved in Videos if you missed them.

July 13	Carolyn Snell—lisianthus
August 10	Janis Harris—sunflowers
September 14	Erin McMullen and Shanti Rade—bouquets
October 12	Julio Freitas—foam-free design
November 16	Mimo Davis and Barb Lamborne—flower farming study groups
December 14	Miranda Duschack—grant writing

In this year's election, members in the North and Central, and South and Central Regions will vote for their Regional Director. Please review this information, and take just a few minutes to cast your vote when you receive an electronic ballot later this summer. Your participation is vital!

North and Central Regional Director representing Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Susan Rockwood, Arcola Trail Flower Farm, Stillwater, Minnesota

I became a full-time flower farmer in 2015. I guess you could call this my encore career since it began after I retired from a career in healthcare administration. My husband and I started Arcola Trail Flower Farm on our small farm in Stillwater, Minnesota, after my sister in California suggested we grow cut flowers as a business. I wasn't sure it would be feasible here in Minnesota, but we were pleasantly surprised. We are now in our fifth season growing and selling cut flowers in the Twin Cities—wholesale, grocery, retail, DIY brides, and a CSA flower subscription. We are also able to offer tours, classes, and small events on the farm.

Fortunately, I was encouraged to join the ASCFG at the very beginning (thank you, Jennie) and it made all the difference. I have benefited firsthand from the education, networking, support, and expertise of the ASCFG and its members, and am honored to be nominated for this position. As a Board member, I would be committed to helping the ASCFG continue to be a relevant professional organization for new and seasoned growers alike. With all the new growers entering the field, I hope my more recent experience starting a flower farming business together with my leadership in healthcare will bring a useful perspective to the Board. There are so many talented growers in the North and Central Region and I would love the opportunity to serve as liaison to those members.

South and Central Regional Director representing Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah.

Jane Hudon, Rancho Verde Flowers, Nathrop, Colorado

I'm so honored to be given this opportunity to run for the South and Central Regional Director position.

I have been designing with flowers for most of my life. In 2012 I started our flower farm with just a couple of 50' long beds. At that time I was working full time, so every morning before work I would go into my small seed starting greenhouse and plant a few four packs of seeds. Some days I managed to plant more, but my goal was to start something every day. This was my small, yet manageable start to flower farming.

Today, we are a regenerative no-till flower farm on about half an acre, at two different locations. Our farm is in the mountains of Colorado at an elevation of 8,000' roughly, so the season is a little different than most. We sell flowers wholesale to a couple of small local stores, have a small flower CSA, and new this year, we are selling and doing retail porch deliveries. Our main source of income is doing wedding flowers, so this year has allowed us the opportunity to get creative with our sales!

I believe in encouraging and inspiring all flower farmers in their journey, especially the smaller farms. There's plenty of room for everyone and by sharing knowledge we will all benefit. Everyone brings their own version of what a flower farm is, everyone has their own style. Our success is measured by how much joy we gain in the process of farming and how much happiness we bring to others by sharing our flowers with the community.

As an ASCFG board member I would encourage collaboration over competition. I would encourage community, a safe, empowering place to share our knowledge, a place to build friendships and lasting relationships that would make us all stronger. This is what the ASCFG has been doing all along, and I would be honored to be a part of carrying this forward.

Shanti Rade, Whipstone Farm, Paulden, Arizona

I have been running my own farm for the last 15 years in the high altitude region of Arizona. After completing a degree in agroecology, I met my husband who had just started to grow vegetables on a quarter-acre and we grew our farm steadily each year. We added flower production to the mix about 5 years in, and I got bit with the flower bug in a big way. We currently grow well over 100 flower and vegetable crops on 20 acres for farmers markets, restaurants, CSA subscriptions, and a growing portion of our business is florist sales. While I help manage the diverse enterprises on the farm, I'm pretty much thinking about flowers constantly, along with marketing strategies, budgets, employees, P&L's, and so many other things that I didn't expect to do in farming.

I have learned so much from the ASCFG. It is a family I am so happy to be a part of. Bringing so many dedicated flower farmers together in an environment that fosters learning, sharing and collaboration has amazing results. But it takes a lot of work to make this organization great. After serving one term as Regional Director, I have a much better idea of the work it takes to make it all happen and I would love to help continue to move this amazing organization forward. I am passionate about helping farmers, new and seasoned, succeed in their businesses. I also feel strongly about helping this organization focus on issues of social justice. While we may have always had the intentions of inclusion and diversity in our organization, we need also to work at being actively anti-racist, and I hope to help the ASCFG in this effort.

Cut Flowers of the Year for 2021

Fresh
Lisianthus 'Corelli Light Pink'
Zinnia 'Queen Lime Orange'
Strawflower 'Silver Rose'

Woody
Philadelphus 'Snowbelle'
Cotinus 'Royal Purple'
Snowberry 'Magical Pride'

Foliage
Eucalyptus 'Baby Blue'
Polygonatum odoratum var. *pluriflorum* 'Variegatum'
Bupleurum 'Graffiti Gold'

Bulb
Amaryllis 'Rilona'
Dahlia 'Cornel Red'
Lily 'Zelmira'

Armitage Updates His Classic *Herbaceous Perennial Plants*

The fourth edition of Allan Armitage's *Herbaceous Perennial Plants: A Treatise on Their Identification, Culture, and Garden Attributes* is scheduled to be released in the summer of 2020.

The first volume, published in 1989, quickly became a leading resource in the horticulture industry. In 1997, it was recognized as one of "75 Great American Garden Books" by the American Horticulture Society. With each new edition, the title has gained in respect and popularity, and has since been simply described as the "bible" of perennial books.

This edition differs significantly from the third (2008). Dr. Armitage has added dozens of new species and hundreds of new cultivars produced by breeders throughout the world. His comments on morphological characteristic are scientifically sound, but the real value of his writing lies in his testaments to a plant's garden worthiness.

Other significant additions are the detailed discussions of ongoing changes in plant nomenclature, and in-depth discourse on invasive plants.

The new book provides easy-to-read information for over 500 genera, species, and cultivars used in the gardening and nursery industries over 1100 pages. It also includes Dr. Armitage's interesting and occasionally controversial thoughts on the internet, pronunciation of plant names, differences in gardening in the South and North, along with many other topics.

Perhaps considering it a companion read to *Specialty Cut Flowers*, ASCFG members will find value in Armitage's detailed description of plants' hardiness, heights, and flowering stem lengths, as well as his usual diligent research on new varieties, useful for cut flower growers who source their plant material from several suppliers. The "Related Species" sections are applicable for growers continually seeking new and unusual plants to add to their lineups.

Considering the heft of the book and the copious amount of information it provides, Armitage's informal and sometimes humorous writing style makes reading a pleasure for horticulturists not only in the United States and Canada, but throughout the world.

Pricing and availability to be announced.

MEET SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PIONEERS & INFLUENCERS
IN DEBRA PRINZING'S NEW
SLOW FLOWERS JOURNAL
– VOLUME ONE –
SLOW FLOWERS
FEATURING FLORAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM 80 FLORAL DESIGNERS, FARMER-FLORISTS AND PRACTITIONERS OF THE SLOW FLOWERS MOVEMENT.
A compilation highlighting the "best of" editorial from the Slow Flowers Journal section, plus Debra Prinzing's articles produced for Florists' Review and 25 new pages of original content highlighting the Florist-Farmer and Farm to Tabletop designs. Other chapters include: Slow Flowers Heroes, The Business of Flowers, Botanical Couture, Slow Weddings and Slow Flower Resources.
PRICE: $19.95
BUY YOURS NOW AT SHOP.WILDFLOWER.MEDIA

Is there a renewal form lost on your desk?

Don't let your membership lapse!

Find new payment plan options on the back of your renewal form and online. Contact us if we can help you remain active in these difficult times. membership@ascfg.org

Dave Dowling Scholarship

Do you know a student who wants to work in the cut flower industry?
Encourage him or her to apply for the ASCFG's Dave Dowling Scholarship.

The program is open to students currently enrolled in a two- or four-year degree, or a graduate degree in horticulture or floriculture. Applicants must have at least one full year of studies remaining before finishing the degree. Part-time students may be considered if they have taken at least 9 credits per year for at least one year, and are planning to enroll in at least 9 credits for the coming year. Students should have worked, be currently working, or plan to work after graduation in a commercial cut flower operation.

The ASCFG is deeply committed to the principles of equity and inclusiveness, and seeks to create a diverse community for its members. Minorities, women, and individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply.

Here's what 2017 recipient Drew Groezinger tells us:

The ASCFG Dave Dowling Scholarship has provided me with incredible opportunities both in and out of the classroom. This scholarship showed me that the ASCFG is dedicated to, and invested in, the longevity of the specialty cut flower farmer.

When I applied for and received the Dowling Scholarship, my farm, Clara Joyce Flowers, was slowly becoming a reality. Once I realized that there was an entire professional community devoted to the same goals I possessed, my faith and confidence in my farm grew by leaps and bounds.

Presently, Clara Joyce Flowers is growing on 9 acres and features over 12,000 square feet of greenhouse space. We ship our blooms nationwide, sell to local wholesalers, florists, farmers' markets, and use our blooms for our ever-growing event design clients.

So much of the knowledge and skill that I possess today stems directly from my fellow members of the ASCFG. That same knowledge base was founded on receiving the ASCFG Dave Dowling Scholarship. Without the opportunities that have been presented to me through the ASCFG, I wouldn't be where I am today.

For more information go to www.ascfg.org/outreach/dowling-scholarship/

ASSOCIATION OF
Specialty Cut Flower Growers
RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Research • Growth • Results

The ASCFG Research Foundation was formed in 2004 as a 501(c)(3) organization. This non-profit and tax-exempt status allows the Research Foundation to apply for grants and to raise money for larger research projects that would be conducted by universities. The Research Foundation is currently funded solely by ASCFG member donations and occasional auctions held at ASCFG conferences and meetings. The ASCFG Research Foundation supports a competitive grant program open to universities, governmental agencies, and other tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organizations.

Round Up for Research!

When you make your renewal payment of $195, round up to $200 and donate $5 to the ASCFG Research Foundation. Or, donate any amount online or anytime and include your suggestions for future research!

From the DIRECTOR

A Year Like No Other

Judy M. Laushman

The year 2020 seems to be lasting a decade, and it's only midsummer. We started with great hopes: an ASCFG membership exploding with new creative and successful growers, a dynamic and committed Board of Directors, and a Strategic Plan that would help us find and collaborate with experienced partners to create new educational and research programs for our members.

All those positives are still in place, but as the country—and much of the world—lurches from crisis to crisis, we've been sidetracked by a global pandemic, an economic recession, record unemployment, and calls, increasingly from voices not heard before, for social justice.

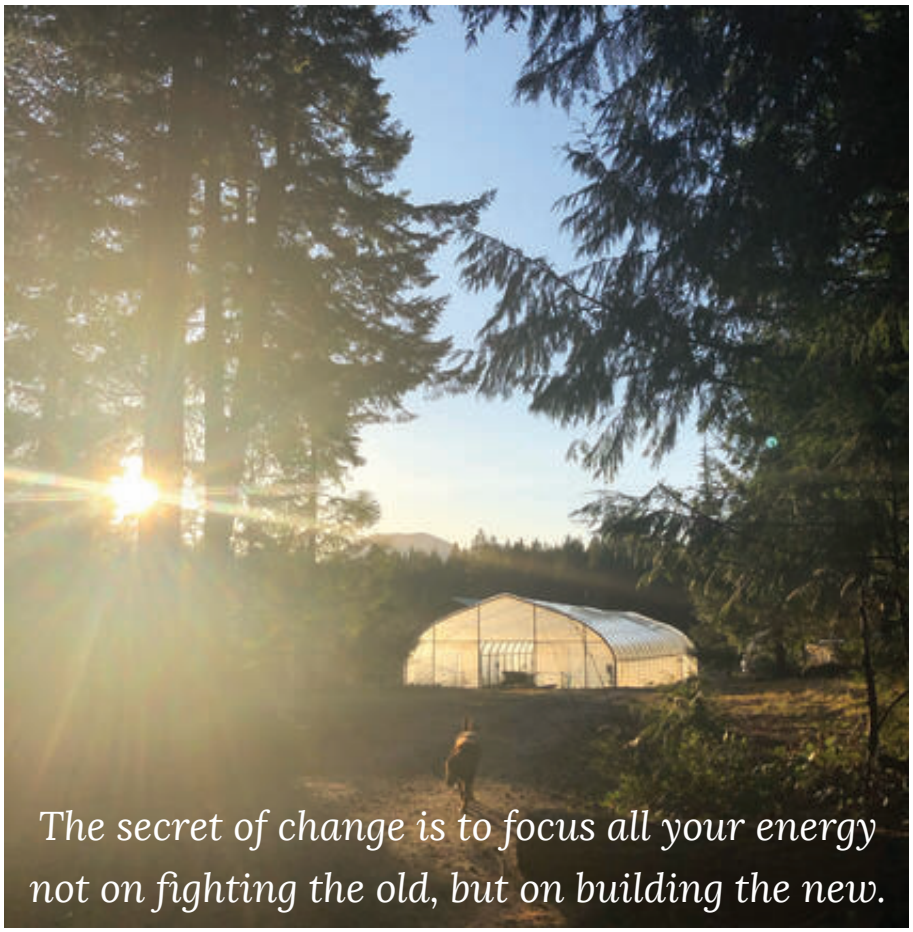
As you'll read in these pages, ASCFG members were swift to pivot (are we tired of that word yet?) to new marketing systems, and taught themselves to adapt—not without sacrifice—to unfamiliar methods. We couldn't be prouder of their initiative and energy, and believe their successes will carry them through this season and beyond. We know, though, that not all cut flower growers were able to surmount the challenges they faced, and hope they'll be able to turn around their businesses in the future.

Given the constantly changing nature of the pandemic's spread, and the disparity in reporting data, it's virtually impossible for an organization like ours to now provide accurate information on COVID-19, but in early days, we organized as much as we could from national and state agencies to share with members.

After the horrific events of late May, and the days that followed, the ASCFG Board of Directors quickly met via Zoom to set a course for the organization to more transparently address social injustice, as well as the disparity of diversity in the Association. This topic had already been included in the Strategic Plan, but will now play a more prominent role moving forward.

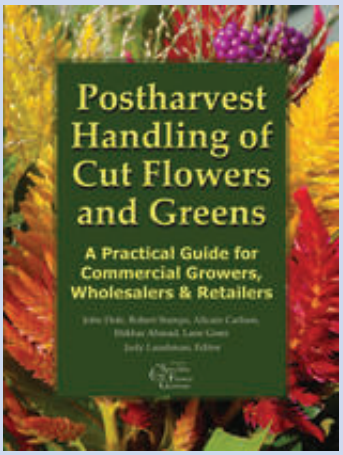
The basis for the action items outlined in the Strategic Plan was a survey sent to all members last fall. Two topics members mentioned frequently as those they'd like to learn more about were organic production of cut flowers, and cooperative marketing. We're happy to present articles, each of which we hope will be the first in a series, on these subjects in this issue of the *Quarterly.* We thank the members who were involved in these features, and hope more of you will provide input as we continue to explore these options, in the magazine and on other education platforms.

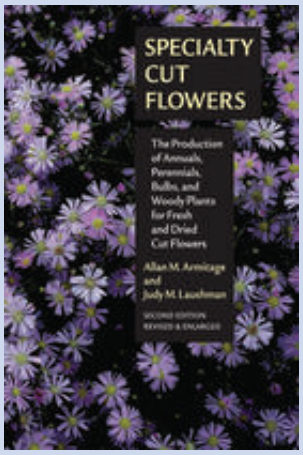
We look to the second half of the year with cautious optimism, and with gratitude for the generosity and goodwill of our members. We know that working with the soil provides a life balance and a positive purpose not always afforded our fellow humans, and hope that you'll share that privilege and peace with others.

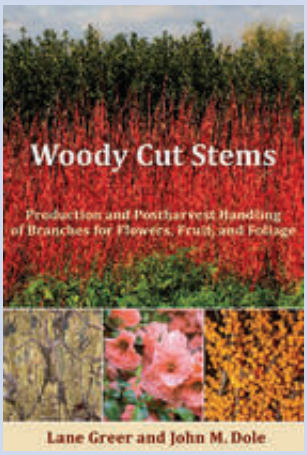


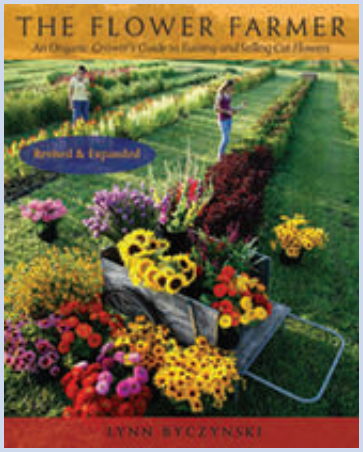
ORDER ASCFG BOOKS

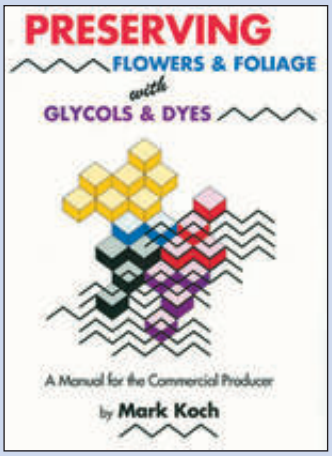
at www.ascfg.org/resources/ascfg-books




SPECIALTY CUT FLOWERS
The Production of Annuals, Perennials, Bulbs, and Woody Plants for Fresh and Dried Cut Flowers
Allan M. Armitage and Judy M. Laushman


Woody Cut Stems
Production and Postharvest Handling of Branches for Flowers, Fruit, and Foliage
Lane Greer and John M. Dole





ORDER LOGO WEAR

at www.ascfg.org/membership/logoapparel

Ednie Flower Bulbs
A division of Fred C. Gloeckner & Co, Inc.

DISTRIBUTORS OF SEED, BULBS, PLANTS, PLUGS, AND GREENHOUSE SUPPLIES FOR ALL OF YOUR CUT FLOWER NEEDS

Gloeckner

NOW IS THE TIME TO ORDER THESE ITEMS FOR YOUR FALL AND SPRING SALES!

Anemone Galilee Pastel Mix

Sweet William Electron

Ranunculus Amandine Mix

Photo Courtesy Three Toads Farm
Amaryllis Minerva

Tulip Pure Passion

Peony Etched Salmon

Narcissus Tahiti

Ranunculus Butterfly Artemis

Rudbeckia Hirta
Cherry Brandy

Larkspur Qis Mix

Allium Purple Sensation

For Bulbs & Perennials . Call 800.243.3643 . support@ednieflowerbulb.com
For Seeds, Young Plants & Grower Supplies . Call 800.345.3787 . Info@fredgloeckner.com
For a copy of our Bareroot Perennial & Fall Bulb catalog contact our office.
www.fredgloeckner.com www.ednieflowerbulb.com